University of Alberta

The *Libri Carolini* and the Application of Scholarship

by

Patricia Mary Dutchak

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ABSTRACT

The *Libri Carolini*, written at the Carolingian court in the early 790's, are a lengthy refutation of the decrees of the Second Nicene Council. This thesis examines the *Libri Carolini* in the context of the court's religious, political and, above all, intellectual preoccupations. Political and religious themes within the *Libri Carolini* are linked to problems facing the court, and the state of Carolingian scholarship and its goals are considered. A close reading of Book IV chapter 11 leads to a discussion of some of the assumptions underlying Carolingian scholarship. Next, another chapter analysis shows how closely scholarship, politics and theology were intertwined. The *Libri Carolini* are presented as a significant product of the Carolingian Renaissance and the court that supported it.

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The first citation of any work is given as a complete reference. Subsequent citations of the same work are abbreviated.

All translations are my own.

Introduction

At the end of the 780's, the Franks and their king Charlemagne had reason to be pleased with themselves: years of campaigning had restored the boundaries of the realm to those of the Merovingian kingdom at its height and had even extended them deep into Italy. Moreover, the court was becoming an intellectual centre as well as a military headquarters, as scholars from all of Christian Europe, even from outside the Frankish realms, journeyed to the court of the leading patron of the age. Into this exuberant, self-confident community were suddenly tossed the *Acta* of the Second Nicene Council, a record of the proceedings and decisions of a synod far away in Asia Minor. So great was the dismay and alarm at the Carolingian court when the *Acta* were read that Charlemagne appointed a newly arrived scholar, Theodulf, a Visigoth from the southwestern part of the Frankish empire, to attack the decrees of the council. Theodulf obliged; the result, after various emendations overseen by a committee of scholars headed by the king himself, was a lengthy work that begins by trumpeting the king's power and piety:

> *"In nomine Domini et salvatoris nostri Iesu Christi. incipit opus illustrissimi et excellentissimi seu spectabilis viri Caroli, nutu dei regis Francorum, Gallias, Germaniam Italiamque sive harum finitimas provintias Domino opitulante regentis, contra synodum, quae in partibus Graetiae pro adorandis imaginibus stolide sive arroganter gesta est."*[1]

The work which follows this resounding opening is usually called the *Libri Carolini*, the Caroline Books, or sometimes the *Opus Caroli Magni,* since it was written in

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[1]Theodulf of Orleans, *Opus Caroli Regis contra Synodum (Libri Carolini), MGH Concilia t.II suppl I*, Ann Freeman, editor (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1998), *Praefatio*, 97, "in the name of the Lord and of our saviour Jesus Christ, here begins the work of the most famous and excellent and admirable man, Charles, by God's will king of the Franks, the Gauls, Germany and Italy, and with God's help ruling the provinces neighbouring these, against the synod which was stupidly and arrogantly conducted in the Greek regions concerning the adoration of images."

Charlemagne's name. The *Libri Carolini*, written by Theodulf with assistance from other members of the dismayed Carolingian court, are a protest, heartfelt and sincere yet often considered insignificant, provoked by the *Acta* recording the latest episode in the continuing drama of the Byzantine iconoclasm controversy. Charlemagne's court scholars applied the latest Latin learning to urgent theological and political disputes; the result, the *Libri Carolini,* is an early, excellent and representative product of the resurgence in Frankish learning sometimes called the 'Carolingian Renaissance'.

In historical studies today, the *Libri Carolini* (LC) most often make a brief appearance in connection with the iconoclasm controversy which caused so much turmoil in the Byzantine empire in the eighth and early ninth centuries. The LC are usually approached as the western contribution to a largely eastern discussion and "treated as an ill-tempered and irrelevant intervention."[2] They are considered superficial, marred by a failure to grasp and address the central ideological issues and driven by political envy and rancour, and so are dismissed as unworthy of serious analysis. Most of the work done in the last century on the LC as a complete document rather than a source of discrete data has concentrated on determining the author and the circumstances of creation and on the establishment of a critical text.[3] These efforts have largely been successful in the last few

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[2]Peter Brown, "A Dark Age Crisis: Aspects of the Iconoclastic Controversy," *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1982), 256.

[3]For instance, Hubert Bastgen, "Das Capitulare Karls d. Gr. über die Bilder oder die sogennanten Libri Carolini," I *Neues Archiv* 36(1911), 629-666, II *Neues Archiv* 37(1912), 13-51, III *Neues Archiv* 37(1912), 453-533; Ann Freeman, "Additions and Corrections to the Libri Carolini: links with Alcuin and the Adoptionist Controversy," *Scire Litteras*, S. Kramer and M. Bernhard, editors (Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie des Wissenschaften, 1988), 159-169, "Einleitung," *Opus Caroli Regis contra Synodum (Libri Carolini)*, *MGH Concilia t. II* (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1998), 1-93, "Further Studies in the Libri Carolini, III The Marginal Notes in Vaticanus Latinus 7207," *Speculum* 46(1971), 597-612 and "Theodulf of Orleans and the Libri Carolini," *Speculum* 23 (1957), 663-705; Paul Meyvaert, "The Authorship of the 'Libri Carolini'," *Revue Bénédictine* 89(1979), 29-57; Luitpold Wallach, *Alcuin and*

decades; scholars can now begin to assess the LC as a complex document of thoughtful scholarship that addresses religious doctrine in the context of manifold concerns of the Carolingian court. Liebeschutz has pointed the way; in an article about early medieval philosophy he gives a brief discussion of the LC, calling the work a "picture of Frankish mentality as the expression of a Christian civilization."[4] The principles of Christian scholarship enunciated by Theodulf, when applied to the question of the adoration of images, have produced a text incorporating the problems and attitudes that characterized the Carolingian court at a turning point in its history, when expansion was slowing and the court was beginning to settle down.[5] T.F.X. Noble, in his recent article "*Tradition and Learning in Search of Ideology: the LC*" examines the treatise as a whole; he identifies four themes in the LC (Biblical, ecclesiastical, papal and Christian-imperial) and links them to contemporary concerns.[6] The LC, however, are of such length and complexity that much remains to be done.

The surface story of the LC is one of a specific event (the arrival of the *Acta* at the Frankish court,) a response (outrage) and a tangible result (the manuscript of the LC.) But why were the Carolingians so outraged, and why did they act upon their outrage? Investigation into the outrage and the result soon reveals that the LC are firmly embedded

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Charlemagne: studies in Carolingian history and literature (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1959) and *Diplomatic Studies in Greek and Latin Documents for the Carolingian Age* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977).

[4]Hans Liebeschutz, "Western Christian Thought from Boethius to Anselm," *Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, A.H. Armstrong, editor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 565.

[5]Turning point, F.L. Ganshof, *The Carolingians and the Frankish Monarchy*, translated by Janet Sondheimer (London: Longman Group Limited, 1971), 19, 20.

[6]Thomas F.X. Noble, "Tradition and Learning in Search of Ideology: the Libri Carolini," *The Gentle Voices of Teachers*, Richard E. Sullivan, editor (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1995), 227-260.

in the complex religious, political and, above all, intellectual circumstances of the Carolingian court in the years around 790. Carolingian politics, theology and scholarship came together in the *Libri Carolini.*

In order to discover and analyse the religious, political and intellectual factors involved in the creation of the LC, I begin with the assumption that the LC were deliberately written by thoughtful men and are intimately connected in content and presentation to the assumptions, goals, concerns and abilities of the small court circle responsible for the work.[7] Examination of the issues facing the Carolingian court in 790 brings to light three striking features: intense involvement with Christianity, animosity toward the Byzantines and a new-found scholarship. Close examination of parts of the text shows the ways in which those factors are prominent and closely intertwined in the work and, as a corollary, establishes the significance of the LC for studies of the Frankish court.

I attempt to approach the LC on their own terms. That is to say, I attempt to set to one side, insofar as one ever can, my knowledge of what happened after and what others–whether Byzantines, later Catholics or historians–have declared to be orthodox thinking about the Second Nicene Council and iconoclasm. I try to look at the LC not as a foolish, futile promotion of an always untenable position but as a valid contribution to a vigorous debate whose parameters were still fluid and whose outcome was still unknown.

Chapter 1 begins with the seemingly simple story of the *Libri Carolini* and includes its historiography. Chapter 2 examines the Carolingian court that produced the

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[7]In the tradition of Walter Goffart's The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D.550-800) (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988).

LC, with an emphasis on its concerns about the Christian religion, its relations with the papacy and Byzantium and its scholars. The next two chapters examine Carolingian scholarship as a factor in the creation of the LC, first the tools of grammar, rhetoric and dialectic, then some of the assumptions underlying the practice of scholarship, as brought to light in Book 4 chapter 11. Chapter 5 looks at the animus that pervades the LC. In chapter 6, a close reading of a single chapter demonstrates how Theodulf deftly interweaves all the threads of his work, skilfully applying his scholarship to the religious and political problems of the court.

Chapter 1. The Curious History of the *Libri Carolini,* its Reception and Study

The *Libri Carolini*, despite the effort initially put into their production, had almost no circulation in medieval Europe. Not surprisingly, therefore, the manuscript tradition is very limited. Only five manuscripts have ever been identified, and two of those are lost, one perhaps in Roman riots in 1559. There exist today only the original working manuscript, Vaticanus Latinus 7207, with thousands of corrections (3400!), the Paris-Arsenal 663 manuscript, which Jean du Tillet found in Laon in the sixteenth century, and a single leaf from another manuscript.[1]

The corrected manuscript is one of many fascinating aspects of the LC. Vaticanus Latinus 7207 lacks the preface and book IV, but it reveals the changing fortunes of the LC even as it was composed. The situation that led to the LC changed even before the work was completed. Book I and the beginning of Book II are well written on excellent parchment and neatly corrected. The writing then deteriorates, and corrections are marked but not carried out. The corrections end in the middle of Book III. Book IV, known only from Paris-Arsenal 663, but believed to be a direct copy of Vat. lat. 7207, does not have even the spelling corrections that in the earlier part of the Books changed Theodulf's Visigothic Latin to the Frankish court standard.[2] The project was never completed in its original ambitious form. The failure to complete and publish the work

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[1]Freeman summarizes the manuscript tradition and describes the manuscripts in "Einleitung," 67-76.

[2]Freeman, "Einleitung," 70-72. The differences in spelling between, say, Book I and Book IV are quite noticeable; their particular form is an important point in Freeman's identification of Theodulf as the author.

seems to imply that the authors themselves lost interest and dismissed the LC as insignificant.[3]

Du Tillet published his find in 1549, and, although the LC were placed on the index of forbidden books in about 1550 and remained there until 1900, a few further editions were issued, generally following du Tillet's effort.[4] Migne included the LC in volume XCVIII of the *Patrologia Latina,* along with a lengthy introduction consisting primarily of statements about the authenticity of the work and its relation to the Frankfort synod of 794.[5] Then, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Hubert Bastgen produced several lengthy articles about the Books, rounding off his work with the first critical edition in 1924.[6] Bastgen's edition has now been superseded by a magnificent new critical edition by Ann Freeman.[7] Her edition will be difficult to improve upon; she had few manuscripts, but those are of enviable provenance.

The LC consists of four books, 28 to 31 chapters long; each book also has a preface. The chapters vary greatly in length, from about one page in Freeman's edition to nineteen pages. Each chapter is headed by a statement setting out the point to be addressed: the use of a single word, such as '*conregnare*'; a citation from the *Acta*; a complaint about the participants of the Second Nicene Council. Theodulf is concerned to present his work in an orderly manner (which the Byzantines, he says, do not) and has

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[3]On the other hand, they kept the manuscript and did not reuse the valuable parchment.

[4]Freeman, "Einleitung," 82. About the Index, see J. Payton, "Calvin and the Libri Carolini," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 18(1997), 467-480. Among other reasons, the LC argued vigorously against the ecumenicity of the Second Nicene Council, long since accepted by the Catholic church.

[5]*Prolegomena, PL* vol XCVIII, col 941-1000.

[6]Hubert Bastgen, editor, *Libri Carolini: sive Caroli Magni capitulare de imaginibus* (Hannover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1924); "Das Capitulare."

[7]Theodulf of Orleans, *Opus Caroli Regis*.

grouped his chapters by their general themes.[8] The first four chapters of Book I criticise the Byzantine emperor Constantine V and his mother, the dowager empress Irene, who called the council and presided over it, and general Byzantine arrogance. Book I chapter 5 discusses how wrong it is to misuse Scripture, as a prelude to the remainder of Book I (except chapter 6, which states that Rome must be consulted on important questions of faith) and the first twelve chapters of Book II, all of which show how the Byzantines have misinterpreted individual Bible verses. The rest of Book II discusses similar abuse of various fathers of the church–Ambrose, Augustine, Cyril and so on–and rejects attempts to equate images to such objects as the Ark of the Covenant or the cross. Book III opens with a creed, the Pelagian, wrongly attributed to Jerome, in the first chapter. The remaining 30 chapters in Book III criticise the statements and abilities of participants in the Second Nicene Council, sometimes individually by name, such as Tarasius, or Theodosius, sometimes the synod as a whole. Book IV is much like Book III but in addition includes a comparison of the First and Second Nicene Councils and ends with a discussion of what makes a council ecumenical. Theodulf does not provide an organized discussion of the question of the adoration of images, but instead gives a series of brief commentaries, which sometimes seem unconnected to one another, as he examines individually statements pulled from the *Acta*. That is, there is no grand statement of Theodulf's own position, neatly laid out and summed up, merely a series of statements opposing the Byzantine position. Theodulf is not expounding the correct position; he is demolishing the wrong one piecemeal. This sort of organization, however, coupled with

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[8]LC I.5, 131,"*est et inordinate sive non proprie ab his...usurpatus*"; "is also applied in an unordered and improper manner by these people."

the failure to provide a clear statement of the Frankish doctrinal position, can, at first glance, make the LC seem jumbled and hence insignificant.

Part of the fascination of the LC lies in what we know about the circumstances of their creation and what we do not know but are eager to infer. The story of the LC may be said to begin with the arrival at the Carolingian court, sometime around 790, of a Latin translation of the *Acta* recording the transactions and decrees of the Second Nicene Council, apparently the first intimation the Franks had of the holding of a council of interest to them, in spite of Pope Hadrian I's knowledge and participation.[9] The Latin translation is one of the many intriguing but incomplete bits of the story. It was made in Rome and sent northward; it arrived at the court with sufficient credentials that the Carolingians accepted it as genuine, yet they seemed to think it came to them directly from Constantinople and was an official record produced by the council.[10] Moreover, the translation was so bad that it was not merely muddled but seriously misleading. As the

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[9]The idea of Frankish ignorance of the council raises difficulties, especially since the Franks and the papacy were in frequent contact in the late eighties. Perhaps Hadrian deliberately withheld information, although that would have been difficult, since many people in the administration would have known of the letter and the delegates. Perhaps those in the know thought that the Franks would be uninterested and so never bothered to inform them. Perhaps the Franks were vaguely aware of an eastern council or papal messengers or both, but did not connect them or think them of any unusual significance, particularly to Latin Christianity. See Hans Georg Thümmel, "Die Fränkische Reaktion auf das Nicaenum 787 in den 'Libri Carolini'," *Das Frankfurter Konzil von 794*, Rainier Berndt, editor (Mainz: Selbstverlag der Gesellschaft für Mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte, 1997), 966; Freeman, "Einleitung," 1-2; Christopher T. Roper, *Carolingian Diplomacy in the Dynamic Pursuit of Legitimacy*, PhD dissertation, University of Connecticut, 1996, 127-128.

[10]The provenance of the translation is also awkward. It was certainly made in Rome, but an entry in the York Annals, now accepted as genuine, implies that the Carolingians thought the translation came to them from Constantinople. Perhaps they thought it an official Byzantine translation which passed through Rome on its way to them. Thümmel suggests it arrived with a covering letter from the pope, now lost, certainly a plausible idea. The *Codex Carolinus* was assembled at around this time, however, and the survival chances of any letter considered important, as anything associated with the *Acta* should have been, ought to have been unusually high. See Thümmel, "Die Fränkische Reaktion", 966; Freeman, "Einleitung," 1-2; Roper, *Carolingian Diplomacy*, 127-128.

papal librarian Anastasius remarked when he prepared a new translation several decades later, the original translator apparently had only a basic knowledge of Greek and Latin.[11] The translator rendered both '*προσκυνησις*', which the Greeks applied only to icons, and '*λατρεια*' which they reserved for God, by the single Latin word '*adoratio*', thus completely erasing the Greeks' careful distinction between two sorts of honour. Elsewhere, the translator or copyist omitted a negative, thus turning a refusal to worship images into an affirmation of image-worship. In places, the translator gave a word-by-word translation from Greek to Latin which, of course, sometimes resulted in gibberish, as the Carolingians duly noted. Still, the Carolingians were very quick to take offense. The Latin word '*adorare*' had, even then, a range of meanings which could have been acknowledged; according to Du Cange, '*adorare*' could cover both '*honorare*' and '*venerari*'.[12]

The Carolingians immediately responded to what they saw as an attack on a basic tenet of Christianity–the prohibition against worshipping anything other than God. Their response took the form of a major theological treatise, carefully refuting, point by point,

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[11] "*Interpres pene per singula relicto utriusque linguae idiomate, adeo fuerit verbum e verbo secutus.*" Anastasius Bibliothecarius, *Praefatio Anastasii in Septimam Synodum*, *PL CXXIX* col 195. "The interpreter abandoned the idioms of both languages and followed almost through individual words, indeed word by word." Adriányi's paraphrase of this conveys an even harsher judgment: "*Wie der spätere Übersetzer, der berühmte römische Bibliothekar Anastasius sagte, verstand der damalige Übersetzer weder richtig Latein noch Griechisch.*" G. Adriányi, "Rezeptionsprobleme bezüglich des zweiten Konzils von Nizäa in der karolingischen Zeit," *Streit um das Bild*, Josef Wohlmuth, editor (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1989), 59.

[12] "*Adorare, in sacris litteris, et apud Scriptores Ecclesiasticos, saepe pro honora et venerari sumitur.*" "'*Adorare*', in sacred literature and among ecclesiastical writers, is often used for '*honora*' and '*venerari*'." Charles Du Cange, *Glossarium mediae et infimae Latinitatis*, *Tomus I* (Paris: Firmin Didot Fratres, 1840), 88. Niermeyer's entry for '*adorare*' includes "to salute a person deferentially (even without the idea of deification)" and cites Fredegar, Anastasius Bibliothecarius and the *Vita* of Pope John I. J.F. Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 22.

all the errors, of whatever sort–doctrinal, grammatical, interpretational–made by the Byzantines. One scholar, now generally accepted as Theodulf of Orleans, wrote the four books that make up the *Libri Carolini*. Theodulf did not, however, act entirely on his own. His manuscript was reviewed by a committee, and many corrections, still visible on Vat. Lat. 7207. were made to both content and form (i.e. spelling). The committee included the king himself, Charlemagne; small notes in Tironian shorthand on the margins of the manuscript have been deciphered and are now accepted as Charlemagne's comments.[13]

At some point the Carolingians sent a summary known as the *Capitulare contra synodum*, consisting of chapter headings, to Pope Hadrian I, perhaps as a promise and demonstration of their support against the dangerous doctrines being promoted by the Byzantines. But Hadrian knew about the Second Nicene Council long before it took place. Constantine VI invited Hadrian to attend, and although Hadrian himself did not go, he sent two legates and a letter which were eagerly received and given a prominent place in the proceedings. Moreover, Hadrian had access to a Greek copy of the *Acta* and the reports of his legates; he was fully aware of the council's pronouncements and supported them, in principle if not every detail (he had not yet ratified the results.) When he read the Carolingians' proposed attack on the Second Nicene Council, he was horrified and promptly arranged for a detailed refutation to be composed and sent northward. His reply did not directly address all the points raised by Theodulf, but it was enough to show the Carolingians that their masterwork, the *Libri Carolini*, was based on incorrect

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[13]Freeman, "Einleitung," 48-49.

assumptions and was potentially embarrassing to both themselves and their ally the pope.

So the grand official revision of Theodulf's work was never completed; the LC were quietly set aside and largely forgotten. In the Frankfurt council of 794, a major assembly of bishops from all the Frankish realms with papal legates in attendance, there was only a brief mention of the Second Nicene Council and that, possibly, at the initiative of a delegate, not a court official.[14] Charlemagne and his advisors seem to have dropped the entire issue of the Second Nicene Council and image worship. The icon question did not surface again in western Europe until around 820, when Louis the Pious and his advisors took a stand very close to that advocated in the *Libri Carolini* without, however, referring to the Books. In 870 Hincmar of Rheims said that he had read the LC in his youth, and he had a copy made, which was for several centuries in the library of the monastery in Laon. But the LC never had much circulation in medieval Europe; after Hincmar, the Books disappear entirely from our view until the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

At that time, in yet another fascinating twist to the story of the LC, they became not only known, but controversial. Jean du Tillet, a French bishop, found the complete copy in Laon and published it. The Protestants immediately seized on the Books as support for their position on images; indeed, Calvin probably saw the manuscript itself before publication and put his knowledge to use at once.[15] Catholics, unwilling to see Charlemagne as other than a staunch and loyal ally of the pope, tried to show the work

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[14]Freeman, "Einleitung," 9.

[15]J. Payton, "Calvin and the Libri Carolini."

was a forgery and did not fully abandon their efforts until the nineteenth-century discovery of the Vatican manuscript that is so clearly a working copy. Meanwhile, the books were hastily placed on the index of forbidden works where they remained until 1900. Thus in the early modern period, the LC were seen as fully relevant to contemporary concerns, with their distant origins in the court of the redoubtable and admirable Charlemagne giving them an added authority (the Carolingians would have appreciated the reasoning.) The views advanced in the LC were judged in the sixteenth century not by the circumstances in which they were produced but by their usefulness in sixteenth-century disputes.

In the past several decades, the LC have figured in much scholarship. Theodulf, bishop of Orleans from 798 to 817, is now, after considerable discussion, generally accepted as the principal author of the Books; he receives considerable attention as one of the leading theologians and poets of his time.[16] The history and influence of the LC–limited as they are–have been examined.[17] Recent discussions of iconoclasm and art include references to the LC. [18] The LC, however, are usually dismissed as peripheral by

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[16]The question of authorship was contentious, with Wallach in particular vigorously supporting Alcuin. See Wallach, *Alcuin and Charlemagne* and *Diplomatic Studies*; Freeman, "Einleitung," 12-22, and "Theodulf of Orleans," 663-705; Meyvaert, "The Authorship," 29-57. On Theodulf and his work, see, for instance: Lawrence Nees, *A Tainted Mantle: Hercules and the classical tradition at the Carolingian court* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1974); June-Ann Greeley, *Social Commentary in the Prose and Poetry of Theodulf of Orleans: a study in Carolingian humanism*, PhD dissertation, Fordham University, 2000; E. Dahlhaus-Berg, *Nova Antiquitas et Antiqua Novitas* (Koln: Böhlau Verlag, 1975); Hans Liebeschutz, "Theodulf of Orleans and the Problem of the Carolingian Renaissance," *Fritz Saxl 1890-1948: a volume of memorial essays from his friends in England*, D.J. Gordon, editor (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1957), 77-92; Nikolai A. Alexandrenko, *The Poetry of Theodulf of Orleans: a translation and critical study*, PhD dissertation, University of Louisiana, 1970.

[17]Ann Freeman, "Carolingian Orthodoxy and the Fate of the Libri Carolini," *Viator* 16(1985), 65-108 and "Einleitung," 8-12 and 67-84; Payton, "Calvin"; Bastgen, "Das Capitulare."

[18]These are, after all, the ideas which the work directly addresses; the word '*imago*' in one form or another appears on virtually every page. See, for instance: Celia M. Chazelle, "Matter, Spirit and Image in the Libri Carolini," *Recherches Augustiniennes* XXI(1986), 163-184, and "Pictures, Books and the

historians of iconoclasm, not surprisingly perhaps, since they were far from the main action and never made public.[19] The Byzantines are considered to have defined the issues central to the debate, and Carolingian attempts to attack the problem from another angle are therefore insignificant.

Historians concentrating on Charlemagne's empire recognize the LC as a theological treatise but, if they investigate, do so briefly since the work deals largely with an issue marginal to western Christianity and since the west eventually accepted the Second Nicene Council as ecumenical, making the LC something of a dead end.[20] Moreover, since the Second Nicene Council is indeed ecumenical, the authors of the LC were wrong, and their theology is irrelevant, not worth studying. Discredited views are assumed to have been always invalid. Political historians note the animus toward the Byzantines, but usually explain it solely (since the theology is discounted) on political grounds or poor communication, soon contradicted by (brief) rapprochement with Byzantium and therefore hypocritical or opportunistic.[21] Recently, however, Auzépy,

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Illiterate: Pope Gregory I's letters to Serenus of Marseilles," *Word and Image* 6 no. 2, (1990), 138-153; Lawrence G. Duggan, "Was Art Really the Book of the Illiterate?" *Word and Image* 5 no. 3 (1989), 227-251; David F. Appleby; "Holy Relic and Holy Image," Word and Image 8 no. 4 (1992), 333-343; William R. Jones, "Art and Christian Piety: Iconoclasm in Medieval Europe," *The Image and the Word*, Joseph Gutman, editor (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977), 75-106; Stephen Gero, "The Libri Carolini and the Image Controversy," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 18(1973), 7-34; Patrick Henry, "The Formulators of Icon Doctrine," *Schools of Thought in the Christian Tradition*, Patrick Henry, editor (Philadelphia: The Fortress Press, 1984), 75-89; Edward James Martin, *A History of the Iconoclastic Controversy* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1978).

[19]For instance, Martin, *A History*.

[20]For example, Heinrich Fichtenau, *The Carolingian Empire* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978); Donald A. Bullough, *The Age of Charlemagne* (London: Elek Books, 1965); Jacques Boussard, *The Civilization of Charlemagne*, translated by Frances Partridge (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968); Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians* (London: Longman, 1983).

[21]For instance: Roper, *Carolingian Diplomacy*.

considering the links between the Second Nicene Council and the synod of Frankfurt, has relied on the LC in her interpretation of the meetings as religious, political and cultural gatherings in which the novelty of the adoration of images as put forth by the Second Nicene Council forced Charlemagne to break with the Byzantine empire.[22] She grants authority to the Carolingian thinking expressed in the LC.

Though passing statements recognize the level of scholarship of the LC, little has been done to examine the combination of religious and political concerns in a bravura display of learning which is itself a religious and political statement aggressively trumpeting the power and ability of the LC's creators.[23] T.F.X. Noble has looked at the LC as a unified literary work, a conscious and deliberate production of the Carolingian governing circle which attempted to set forth and justify opinions on more than merely the proper understanding of images.[24] It remains, however, to "look sideways" and examine the contemporary concerns and inspirations of the court scholars.[25]

Such a sideways look raises many questions: why was the Carolingian court so provoked by the *Acta* that it responded with a work of the size and complexity and venom of the LC to what was, after all, only one more episode in a long-standing problem to which the Franks had mostly been indifferent; what was the significance of the presence of

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[22]Marie-France Auzépy, "Francfort et Nicée II," *Das Frankfurter Konzil von 794*, Rainier Berndt, editor (Mainz: Selbstverlag der Gesellschaft für Mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte, 1997), 279-300.

[23]For instance, "it is a work testifying to the high intellectual level that existed in the early Carolingian church, and thus one worthy of the commencement of the Carolingian Renaissance." Chazelle, "Matter, Spirit," 184.

[24]Noble, "Tradition and Learning."

[25]This expression of Flint's seems to complement Goffart's approach. "Rather than look backwards to their literary ancestors or forward to their heirs, I have tried to look sideways from the texts, and so into the society which pressed upon them and their compilers." Valerie I.J. Flint, *Ideas in the Medieval West* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1988), ix.

the scholars at court; what were they capable of doing; what were they expected to do? Answers to these questions require investigation of the religious situation in the years leading up to the 790's, which called forth the LC and provided its theme, of the political situation, which aggravated religious differences and led to the polemical tone of the work, and of the intellectual situation, which made the work possible and provided the presentation and the detailed content. Such an investigation establishes the particular, brief conjunction of religious, political and intellectual interests that set Theodulf to work on the LC.

Chapter 2. The Carolingian Court in 790

The *Libri Carolini* were written in the years from about 790 to 794, between the defeat of an attempted Lombard-Byzantine coup in Italy in 788 and the Frankfort council of 794. When the LC were begun, the newly extended Carolingian empire was riding high: the Lombards and Byzantines had quickly succumbed to Carolingian might; the Saxons, it seemed, were finally under control; the pope was a trusted ally helping to purify Frankish Christianity and make it a unifying concept throughout the Carolingian realms.[1] By 794, the Saxons had risen yet again, the pope was known to have been working on Christian doctrine in alliance with the Byzantines, the heresy of Adoptionism had proven stubbornly persistent, and severe famine had struck the empire. The Carolingians were discovering for themselves what others before them had found, that the real challenge of an empire is not the getting of it but the keeping and running. Military campaigns were by no means ended in 790: the Saxons were later beaten again and, finally, decisively; the Avars were destroyed a few years later and provided astonishing booty. But Charlemagne was settling down; the Aachen palace was occupied in 794. The precepts of the recently issued *Admonitio Generalis*, a charter calling for the improved education of the clergy, were patiently, persistently being applied.[2]

In this atmosphere, where success brought new problems and the old too often

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[1]On the Frankish high point, see Josef Fleckenstein, "Karl der Grosse, seine Hofgelehrten und das Frankfurter Konzil von 794," *Das Frankfurter Konzil von 794*, Rainier Berndt, editor (Mainz: Selbstverlag der Gesellschaft für Mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte, 1997), 29. For general studies of Charlemagne's reign see Bullough, *The Age of Charlemagne*; Boussard, *The Civilization of Charlemagne*; Fichtenau, *The Carolingian Empire*; and McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians*.

[2]Charlemagne, *Admonitio Generalis*, *MGH Legum Tomus I* (Hannoverae: 1835), 53-62.

turned out to be not quite disposed of, the LC took shape. They directly addressed a particular religious problem–iconoclasm–which had suddenly become urgent, but they were written with an eye alert to the other issues of the day. Charlemagne and his advisors, whether warriors or scholars, were confronting many issues and could not deal with them in isolation; as always, solutions to one problem might impinge on others for good or ill. For a closer look at some of these issues, however, we may divide them roughly into religious and political, internal and external, and include one issue proposed as a solution–scholarship, which figures so largely in the LC.

Christianity was a significant part of the court's thinking about Frankish-controlled territory and its inhabitants.[3] Charlemagne and his advisors saw the king as a defender of the faith, and they said so in the LC and the *Admonitio Generalis*.

> "*Cuius quoniam in sinu regni gubernacula Domino tribuente suscepimus, necesse est, ut in eius [ecclesiae] defensione et ob eius exaltationem Christo auxiliante toto annisu certemus, ut ab eo boni servi et fidelis nomine censeri valeamus*,"

says the LC; in the *Admonitio Generalis*, Charlemagne describes himself as

> "*Ego Carolus, gratia Dei eiusque misericordia donante, rex et rector regni Francorum, et devotus sanctae aeclesiae defensor humilisque adiutor...*"[4]

In the view of the court leaders, the rule of a kingdom given by God and protection of God's church went hand-in-hand. The *Admonitio Generalis*, issued just a year earlier in

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[3]The actual extent and strength of Christian belief among those inhabitants is another question entirely, and a much debated one. McKitterick, for instance, says that one of the aims of church reform was to complete the change from a pagan to a Christian society. Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms 789-895* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), xvii-xx.

[4]LC, Praef, 98, "Since we have accepted into our protection the governance of this kingdom, which the Lord has given, it is necessary that in its [church's] defence and for its exaltation, we fight with all our might, with Christ's help, so that we can be thought of, by Him, by the name of good and faithful servant."; *Admonitio Generalis*, 53, "I, Charles, by the grace and compassion of God, king and ruler of the Franks, and devoted defender and humble helper of the holy church...."

789, laid out clearly the offical Frankish view of the Christian church and its place within the empire. The Church was to provide salvation for the Frankish peoples by giving them moral guidance and teaching. If the educational efforts outlined in the *Admonitio Generalis* were successful, the Church would serve as a unifying concept to bind together the various disparate parts of the new empire. This statement is not to be taken as implying that the Carolingians were cynically using Christianity for their own narrow political purposes; rather, because they fervently believed in Christianity, they thought it their duty to give it (in the proper form) to all their people. They might at the same time expect that imperial unity would thereby be strengthened, but that would be a welcome secondary consequence and not the primary motive.[5] Recognition of the Carolingians' sincere Christianity and the resulting religious imperatives helps explain many Carolingian actions, not least the LC.

Deliberate and practical steps toward a unified practice for Christianity had already been taken. Charlemagne sent for and received a collection of laws, the *Dionysia-Hadriana*, from Hadrian in 774. Liturgy too was marked for reform; the Franks had Roman liturgy brought to them in Pippin's time. According to Theodulf, the work was not only continuing, but also achieving success in the drive for unity:

> "*ut plures illius partis ecclesiae, quae quondam apostolicae sedis traditionem in psallendo suscipere recusabant, nunc eam cum omni diligentia amplectantur, et cui adhaeserant fidei munere, adhaereant quoque*

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[5]Giles Brown says succinctly "Self-interest and idealism fitted compactly together." Giles Brown, "Introduction to the Carolingian Renaissance," *Carolingian Culture: emulation and innovation*, Rosamond McKitterick, editor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 15.

psallendi ordine."[6]

Providing Christianity to all inhabitants of the empire, however, meant in some cases–notably the Saxon–not merely the improvement of teaching and practice, but initial conversion. The task was very difficult, as the repeated conversion and falling-away of the Saxons in step with their defeats and rebellions makes clear. Furthermore, each time the Saxons returned to their idols, the Franks came face-to-face with the reality and dangers of images.[7] To require the adoration of images, in surroundings of lights and incense, was to run a real risk of confusing the new images with the old idols and of blurring the tenets of Christianity (including the awkward concept of monotheism complicated by the doctrine of the Trinity) for people to whom they were strange. When Theodulf spoke of the dangers inherent in paying honours to images, when he worried that rituals established for one purpose might be turned to another, he was not shying at phantoms, but worrying about real problems.[8]

In addition to issues of conversion and practice, the Franks were struggling with a small but stubborn problem of heresy.[9] In the newly acquired regions of Septimania, bishop Felix of Urgel was preaching Adoptionism, that is, that Christ in his human nature was the adopted son of God. The heresy, for so the Franks treated it, developed in Spain

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[6]LC I.6, 136, "so that many churches of the region, which at one time refused to accept the tradition of the apostolic church in chanting, now embrace it with all attentiveness, and that which they had clung to with the gift of faith, they also cling to in the order of the chanting."

[7]Michael McCormick, "Texte, images et iconoclasme dans le cadre des relations entre Byzance et l'occident carolingien," *Testo e immagine nell'alto medioevo*, Settimane di studio del centro Italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo XLI (Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro, 1994), 105.

[8]LC IV.18, 532, "*res aliud conditae, ad aliud videntur usurpatae*," "things established for one purpose are seen to be applied to another."

[9]See John C. Cavadini, *The Last Christology of the West: adoptionism in Spain and Gaul 785-820* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1993).

late in the eighth century. The Spanish proponents were not in Charlemagne's grasp, but Felix was. The Carolingians condemned the heresy, arrested Felix and sent him to Rome in 792, where he duly admitted his error. Upon return, however, he changed his mind once more and withdrew into Spain to the protection of his fellow Adoptionist, archbishop Elipand of Toledo. There the two of them were within the political empire of the Arabs, safely out of reach of both the Franks and the pope. The problem continued to simmer. Alcuin produced several treatises attacking it in the 790's, and several statements in the LC make sense in the context of Adoptionism rather than iconoclasm.[10]

To these continuing concerns of the Frankish church–practice, conversion, heresy–was now added iconoclasm.[11] It was not in any way a new issue, not even for the Carolingians, but until the unexpected arrival of the *Acta* of the Second Nicene Council, Charlemagne and his advisors had not needed to be other than vaguely aware of iconoclasm as someone else's problem. In Francia, interest had generally been limited to the occasional twitch in response to the latest eastern convulsion. The Franks had been content to accept the guidelines set out by Gregory the Great's letters to bishop Serenus of Marseilles some two centuries earlier and to provide mild support for the pope when asked. At the Council of Hiereia in 754, a largely Byzantine gathering condemned images and ordered its precepts to be followed by all Christians. Pope Stephen II, who

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[10]For instance, the creed used includes "*nec factum nec adoptivum sed genitum*" LC III.1, 336; III.4-357.

[11]For general background on iconoclasm, see Martin, *A History*; Thomas F.X. Noble, "John Damascene and the History of the Iconoclastic Controversy," *Religion, Culture and Society in the Early Middle Ages*, T.F.X. Noble and John J. Contreni, editors (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1987), 95-116; Peter Brown, "A Dark Age Crisis"; Henry, "The Formulators"; David Sefton, "The Popes and the Holy Images in the Eighth Century," *Religion, Culture and Society in the Early Middle Ages*, T.F.X. Noble and John J. Contreni, editors (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1987), 117-130.

had not been consulted, objected strongly and allowed many Greek monks, opponents of iconoclasm, to take refuge in Rome. Constantinople no longer effectively controlled Rome and so could not send in the troops as it had on occasion in the seventh century, but it did control southern Italy and Illyria. Byzantium removed several Illyrian bishoprics from Rome's jurisdiction and confiscated several papal estates, a move which still rankled some thirty years later. A synod at Gentilly in 767, which Charlemagne attended with his father Pippin and brother Carlomann, gave the requested support to the moderately iconodule position of the pope; that support was repeated two years later at the Lateran synod, which several Frankish bishops attended. The popes, as spokesmen for western Christianity, at least in their own eyes, and connected by lingering if steadily weakening political and cultural ties to Byzantium, were more closely involved and could safely be left to watch the situation and inform the Carolingians if danger arose–or so the Carolingians thought.

In 784 Constantine VI and his mother Irene decided to hold a new council to reverse the 754 council. This time they took care to include the Latin church by sending Hadrian I a personal invitation. He did not accept for himself, but he sent two envoys and a letter which received honourable attention. The letter was read aloud to the assembly (though not the part demanding the return of the confiscated estates) and included among the *Acta*. Hadrian appeared to speak for western Christianity all by himself; at any rate, he apparently did not inform the Carolingian court of the council or his stance. Alliance only went so far, and Hadrian had for some time been seeking political independence and

religious authority.[12]

The contents of the *Acta* changed the Frankish view of the situation. The Second Nicene Council, as the Franks understood from the version they had available, declared that images must be adored and must be honoured with lights and incense on pain of anathema and further declared itself an ecumenical council and binding on all Christians. What the Franks considered a minor regional problem somewhere else was being given a universal solution to which they were required to submit, even though they had not been consulted and they disagreed with the doctrines being expressed.

Theological debates were exacerbated by political conflicts that tended to emphasize boundaries and hence difference through adversarial stances, contradicting the concept of unity within the Christian church. The Byzantine empire, the Carolingian empire and the pope, the three major powers of Europe, all had working relationships with each other in matters of territorial rights and claims, but their different aspirations and assumptions about their relative positions meant that open conflict was a constant possibility. Each was worried that the other two might unite and threaten the odd man out. Roughly speaking, Byzantium was mindful of former empire, the pope remembered former estates and wanted political independence and religious supremacy, and the Franks were conscious of present power. Byzantium claimed both political and religious

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[12]For discussion of the papal position, see Peter Classen, "Karl der Grosse, das Papsttum und Byzanz," *Karl der Grosse: Lebenswerk und Nachleben*, Band I, Wolfgang Braunfels, editor (Düsseldorf: Verlag L. Schwann, 1965), 537-608; Thomas F.X. Noble, "The Papacy in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries," *The New Cambridge Medieval History vol II c. 700-900,* Rosamond McKitterick, editor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 563-586 and *The Republic of St. Peter* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984); Rudolf Schieffer, "Charlemagne and Rome," *Nascita dell'Europa ed Europa carolingia: un'equazione da verificare*, Settimane di studio del centro Italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo XXVIII (Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro, 1981), 279-295.

authority, but the Franks gave military support to the pope in return for religious support and legitimation that tacitly contradicted Byzantine claims. Aspirations collided. Consider, for example, the Frankish conquest of the Lombard kingdom in 774. The Byzantines still considered the territory rightfully theirs, two centuries after they lost most of it, but the pope too had claims to it (the Donation of Constantine stems from this era) and Charlemagne might reasonably feel he had done all the work and deserved the rewards.

Although the rulers of Byzantium were always willing to deal with such powers as the Franks, they never relinquished the idea that the Roman Empire, whose direct and legitimate heirs they considered themselves to be, was still legally and morally the supreme ruler of all territories it had once controlled.[13] In practice, the Franks and other successor kingdoms were fully autonomous. Nevertheless, if a chance to reduce those kingdoms to subordinate positions or merely appropriate some of their territory should appear, justification was always available; it was even naggingly or enticingly in the background as a goad to aggressive action. Moreover, the Franks were now a more obvious irritant. In the past two centuries the Lombards had served as a useful rallying point for the Franks and Byzantines, providing a common enemy on occasion while

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[13]On the relations between the Franks and the Byzantines, see Michael McCormick, "Byzantium and the West 700-900," *The New Cambridge Medieval History vol II c. 700-900*, Rosamond McKitterick, editor (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1995), 349-380 and "Diplomacy and the Carolingian Encounter with Byzantium down to the Accession of Charles the Bald," *Eriugena: East and West*, Bernard McGinn and Wilhelmien Otten, editors (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1994), 15-48; John Meyendorff, "Byzantium as the Center of Theological Thought in the Christian East," *Schools of Thought in the Christian Tradition*, Patrick Henry, editor (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 65-74; Philip Grierson, "The Carolingian Empire in the Eyes of Byzantium," *Nascita dell'Europa ed Europa carolingia: un'equazione da verificare*," Settimane di studio del centro Italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo XXVIII (Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro, 1981), 885-916.

functioning as a physical barrier between the major eastern and the rising western powers. The Byzantines occasionally paid the Franks to attack the Lombards in the rear; the Franks could see the Lombards pinned down in Italy by the Byzantines and so rarely able to intervene effectively across the Alps. Now, however, Franks and Byzantines had a common boundary; each occupied part of Italy and wanted more. Diplomatic missions occasionally took place; there was even a betrothal between Charlemagne's daughter and the young Byzantine emperor Constantine VI.[14] Occasional clashes occurred along the indeterminate boundaries between the two political organizations, aggravated by semi-independent dukedoms like Benevento. The Franks had no reason to think themselves less powerful or less capable than the Byzantines; indeed the Franks had easily defeated the Lombards who had taken most of Italy away from the Byzantine empire. Yet now, in the Second Nicene Council, the Byzantines seemed to be giving orders to the Franks.

The Carolingians and the Byzantines both operated in wider arenas, but they encountered one another primarily in Italy, a location which gave Rome and its ruler the pope and his aspirations an added weight. The popes, whether deliberately or not, had removed themselves and Rome from the control of the Byzantines and were now replacing Byzantine rule in parts of Italy. Nevertheless, the secular power of Rome was weak, and the pope, even more than the Franks or the Byzantines, needed an ally. At the same time, he and the local Roman church were presenting themselves (with varying degrees of intensity and success) as the final moral authority and judge of Christian doctrine, without whose support no doctrines were valid. Such a position necessitated a

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[14]Broken off, according to Einhard, because Charlemagne could not bear to part with his daughter. Einhard, *Vita Caroli Magni*, John F. Collins, editor (Bryn Mawr: Bryn Mawr Commentaries, 1984), 19.4.

constant balancing act, advance and retreat, in which the pope could not afford ever to break fully with either of the others, and especially needed to prevent a union of the other two which would leave him exposed. Hadrian I was very good at this balancing act; between 772 when he became pope and 790, he had had a great deal of practice. It is possible that seeking more freedom of action, he deliberately kept the Franks in ignorance of the Second Nicene Council. On the other hand, he may have thought it of little interest to them, underestimating (not unreasonably, given past events) their concern for theological matters and their new-found theological scholarship.

For the scholars who had so recently begun gathering around Charlemagne were a new and complicating element, but one central to the creation of the LC. All the religious and political reasons that urged the Carolingians to a vehement rejection of the Second Nicene Council would have found no intellectual expression had not trained theologians been available to refute the Council on its own grounds. The early eighth century is generally considered a low point in Frankish education and scholarship, as emphasized by the number of foreigners prominent in those fields to the end of the century. The presence of many non-Franks at court is well known: Alcuin the Anglo-Saxon, Peter of Pisa, the Lombard Paul the Deacon, Clement and Dungal from Ireland, and others, including Theodulf himself, a Visigoth. They are all part of a revived cultural activity consciously sought by Charlemagne. In 790, there they were, ready to hand. The leading scholars were not off in distant cities, running bishoprics, like Gregory of Tours, or even Theodulf himself later, nor were they isolated in monasteries, like Bede, or away on the frontiers conducting missions, like Boniface. On the contrary, they were, for the

moment, actually at court, able to advise the king, write his official documents and sit on committees. Carolingian scholars were assuming a new importance.[15]

The cultural revival often called the Carolingian Renaissance was explicitly prescribed in the *Admonitio Generalis* of 789.[16] Here Charlemagne recognized his duty to the church and mandated the education of the clergy as the means of creating a Christian society within the Carolingian empire. The *Admonitio Generalis* set forth an educational policy in which learning centred on the Bible and was entirely directed to the service of religion. Learning was not an end in itself; rather, it was a way of properly understanding the Bible and therefore being able to transmit knowledge of Christianity to the people. The Carolingians gave consistent support to such education, although the Frankish people did not necessarily thereby transform itself into the desired ideal Christian society.

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[15]See John J. Contreni, "The Carolingian Renaissance: education and literary culture," *The New Cambridge Medieval History vol II c. 700-900*, Rosamond McKitterick, editor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 709-757, especially 710. See generally Fleckenstein, "Karl der Grosse."

[16]*Admonitio Generalis*, 53-62. For discussions of the Carolingian Renaissance and its goals or other aspects of it, see, among others, Karl Morrison, "The Church, Reform and Renaissance in the Early Middle Ages," *Life and Thought in the Early Middle Ages*, Robert S. Hoyt, editor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1967), 143-159; Walter Ullman, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1969); Donald A. Bullough, *Carolingian Renewal* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991); Ann Matter, "Exegesis and Christian Education," *Schools of Thought in the Christian Tradition*, Patrick Henry, editor (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 90-105; Janet Nelson, *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1986); John J. Contreni, "The Carolingian Renaissance," *Renaissances before the Renaissance*, Warren Treadgold, editor (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984), 59-74 and "The Carolingian Renaissance: education and literary culture"; McKitterick, *The Frankish Church* and "Das Konzil im Kontext der karolingischen Renaissance," *Das Frankfurter Konzil von 794*, Rainier Berndt, editor (Mainz: Selbstverlag der Gesellschaft für Mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte, 1997); G.W. Trompf, "The Concept of the Carolingian Renaissance," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 34(1973), 3-26; Giles Brown, "Introduction: the Carolingian Renaissance"; Pierre Riché, "Divina Pagina, Ratio et Auctoritas dans la Théologie Carolingienne," *Nascita dell' Europa ed Europa carolingia: un'equazione da verificare*, Settimane di studio del centro Italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo XXVIII (Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro, 1981), 719-763; Anita Guerreau-Jalabert, "La 'Renaissance Carolingienne': modèls culturels, usages linguistiques et structures sociales," *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes* 139(1981), 5-35; Richard E. Sullivan, "The Context of Cultural Activity in the Carolingian Age," *The Gentle Voices of Teachers*, Richard E. Sullivan, editor (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1995); Liebeschutz, "Theodulf of Orleans."

Reform came from the top down; the leading scholars worked to revive knowledge of early Christianity, going eagerly to the patristic learning of late antiquity. Selection and interpretation led to a new synthesis which united German, Roman, Greek, Hebrew and patristic elements.[17] The goal of learning, however, always remained a better understanding of the Bible, which could then be applied to the moral improvement of society.

The *Acta* were, therefore, a glorious opportunity for the application of scholarship. They cited verse after verse from the Bible and could be refuted on their own terms only by precisely the sort of scholar central to the Carolingian Renaissance. The LC answered the *Acta* in kind; they were an application of Biblical studies to a theological dispute carried on at the international level; that is, they were a theological treatise responding to a foreign church council, produced at the court and under the direction of a successful military leader from a recently usurping dynasty, a treatise which disparages the other side and its leadership, both political and ecclesiastical, on the basis of the errors arising from poor scholarship and lack of respect for tradition. The LC were the Carolingian Renaissance put into practice.

The answer to why the Carolingians leaped to attack the Second Nicene Council, especially on the basis of a dubious document of uncertain provenance, lies then in the tangled threads of the political, religious and intellectual situation. The Carolingians had not taken the initiative in responding to the 754 iconclastic council; they were content to support Stephen II when asked. But the speed and extent of the Carolingian reply to the

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[17]Trompf, "The Concept," 23.

787 council (the *Capitulare* to Hadrian and the LC) show an active court eager to appear on a larger stage. Both political and religious motives are at work. A concern for right belief and salvation was intensified by indignation at being ignored in the discussion of such important religious issues and at being expected meekly to accept the strictures of men who were–at least to the Carolingians reading a garbled translation of the *Acta*–dangerously ill-educated. Both sets of motives reflect the tensions of the times and are addressed by the scholarship of the LC.

Chapter 3. The Tools of Scholarship

Scholarship, the ability to understand Scripture and to express that understanding, was an essential factor in the Carolingian reply to the *Acta*. Theodulf employs to good effect the tools common to western European scholars of his day, notably those provided by the three parts of the trivium, grammar, rhetoric and dialectic. These, championed by Boethius and Isidore, were enjoying a new importance because of their position as the gateway to Biblical learning. While Theodulf's principles of scholarship dictate much of the content and argument of the LC, the tools shape its presentation.

A. Grammar

The first and most basic part of the trivium is grammar. For those who were not native speakers of late Latin, the first step in grammar was the acquisition of Latin with its rules; even those who spoke Latin had to master the rules of grammar before anything else could be learned. Indeed, so prevalent was the idea of the importance of grammar, that, according to Contreni, not merely grammar, but grammatical thinking was central to Carolingian scholarship: "the major intellectual trend of the period was to approach learning through the prism of grammar."[1] That is, the laws of grammatical analysis

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[1]John J. Contreni, *Carolingian Learning, Masters and Manuscripts* (Hampshire: Variorum Reprints, 1992), II, 20; see also John J. Contreni, "Carolingian Bible Studies," *Carolingian Essays*, Ute-Renate Blumenthal, editor (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1983), 71-98 and "The Pursuit of Knowledge in the Carolingian Empire," *The Gentle Voices of Teachers*, Richard E. Sullivan, editor (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1995), 106-141; Marcia Colish, *The Mirror of Language* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968), 63-68; Vivien Law, "The Study of Grammar," *Carolingian Culture: emulation and innovation*, Rosamond McKitterick, editor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 88-110. For an extensive discussion of the centrality of grammar and the broader concept of '*grammatica*', see Martin Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture: 'grammatica' and literary*

provided a structure that was applied to truth in general, much as the rules of dialectical analysis provided the interpretative framework for later medieval thought and instruction. Contreni provides examples of how scholars could say that "God is one because the noun Deus is singular."[2] Theodulf too reasons in this way, taking the form of a verb as a statement of belief, not a grammatical convention:

> *"tres personas et unam substantiam in divinitate se credere et fateri demonstrat, cum trium nominum invocationi non pluralia, sed singularia verba intersit."*[3]

The Bible's grammar, however, was not always up to the new standards of well-trained scholars like Theodulf and his colleagues. The objection was met a little later by Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel with the concept of a "Christian grammar" which saw the apparent errors as sources of further enlightenment.[4] But this too shows the central position of grammar, especially in the Bible–so important that variations could never be attributed to simple errors in copying or to differences in education and dialect.

In another discussion of how the Carolingians viewed learning, Contreni says, "the Carolingians appreciated the philological approach to problems."[5] That is, the analysis of any text meant a close reading that took into consideration individual words, their grammatical attributes, their etymology, the technical aspects of their use and the words surrounding them. But if acceptable philological pronouncements are to be made,

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theory, 350-1100 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[2]Contreni, *Learning,* II 20.

[3]LC Praef., 98, "he [the Psalmist] shows that he believes and acknowledges three persons and one substance in divinity, since for the invocation of three names not plural, but singular, words are present."

[4]J. Leclerq, OSB, "Smaragde et la Grammaire chrétienne," *Revue de Moyen Age Latin* T IV.1 (Ja-Av 1948), 108.

[5]Contreni, "The Carolingian Renaissance," 67.

accurate, reliable, authorized texts are essential–a need much more easily stated than met. Nevertheless, the provision of standard versions of essential texts was part of the drive toward uniform standards that would enhance Christianity as a unifying concept for the Frankish kingdoms. Carolingian scholars were well aware of the problems of variant texts; indeed, Kaczynski thinks that the attention given by the Carolingians to editing, revision and translation, to the minutiae of philology is a "distinctive feature of Carolingian scholarship."[6] Both Theodulf and Alcuin produced new editions of the Bible. Theodulf's in particular was a model of textual criticism, which included references to variants and their locations, an early version of a critical apparatus.[7]

Any Latin Bible is the product of translation, as the Carolingians knew well, and they also appreciated the difficulties of translation from one language to another.[8] Perhaps this is one of the reasons they placed so much emphasis on the author of a translation; his authority was just as necessary as that of the original author. Possible losses stemming from translation are discussed in Book II chapter 30, which acknowledges that the metres and rhythms to be found in Scripture may be different after translation–though not, says Theodulf, lost; the Bible is still the primary source for knowledge of metre as it is for everything else.[9] In an interesting chapter, Book II chapter

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[6]Bernice M. Kaczynski, "Edition, Translation and Exegesis: the Carolingians and the Bible," *The Gentle Voices of Teachers*, Richard E. Sullivan, editor (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1995), 171.

[7]Contreni, "Carolingian Bible Studies," 78; Contreni, *Learning*, I 13; Dahlhaus-Berg, *Nova Antiquitas*, 48; see also Bonifatius Fischer, "Bibeltext und Bibelreform," *Karl der Grosse II Das Geistige Leben*. Helmut Beumann, editor (Düsseldorf: L. Schwann, 1965), 156-216.

[8]This makes the Carolingian insistence on examining the precise wording of their copy of the *Acta* all the more noticeable and their motives in doing so more suspect.

[9]LC II.30, 313.

15, about the Byzantine misuse of a statement by Ambrose of Milan, Theodulf accuses the Byzantines of changing Ambrose's original Latin in order to further their cause.[10] In view of the other known faults of the unknown Roman translator of the *Acta*, however, perhaps we have here an example of the problems of double translation (from Latin to Greek and back to Latin); on the other hand, perhaps it is merely a matter of textual variation.[11] Theodulf, however, is so eager to condemn the Byzantines that he overlooks possibilities he considers elsewhere.[12] In another chapter, Theodulf concedes that translation can affect meaning, that the peculiar quality of a language may lose its force in translation:

> "*...aut alterius linguae proprietati deputandum est quae plerumque, dum ad aliam linguam transit, vim suam amittit.*"[13]

Linguistic studies in the Carolingian era were numerous and even, in Theodulf's case, included references to Hebrew. He several times asserts that the Latin he refers to agrees with the Hebrew original, not just because of the authority of the translator (generally Jerome) but because he, Theodulf, knows both match:

> "*nec in Hebreo habetur nec in nostris Latinis codicibus, qui a beato Hieromio ex Hebraica veritate translati sunt, uspiam reperitur.*"[14]

How did Theodulf know what was in the Hebrew original? Had he seen the Hebrew?

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[10]LC II.15, 262.

[11]The process is used today to check the accuracy of mechanical translations

[12]See chapter 5, Attacking the Byzantines.

[13]LC III.5, 360, "...or must be reckoned in the peculiar quality of the other language, which for the most part loses its force when transformed into another language."

[14]LC I.9, 151,"it is not in the Hebrew, nor is it ever found in our Latin books, which were translated from the Hebrew truth by Saint Jerome."

Probably he had consulted a Hebrew scholar, as he did later in editing the Bible.[15] A similar statement, a little later, again refers to the original Hebrew:

> *"tunica enim Ioseph nec in Hebreis codicibus nec in Latinis, qui ex Hebraica veritate translati sunt, a patre osculata vel oculis inposita fuisse narretur."*[16]

In Book I chapter 13 Theodulf refers to a Hebrew original and to four Latin versions, none of which, of course, supports the Greek assertion that Jacob adored the peak of Joseph's staff. To this assertion, Theodulf replies

> *"Ecce Hebraica veritas eundem patriarcham Deum adorasse ad caput lectuli clamat. Ecce Latinorum bibliotheca eum aut 'super caput virgae' aut 'in capite' aut 'in cacumine' vel 'super cacumen' adorasse denuntiat."*[17]

He acknowledges that there may be more than one translation, but will not accept the Greek version.

Theodulf displays his acute sense of grammatical niceties and his detailed knowledge of them throughout the LC. He inserts a passage from Augustine which explains the importance of accents in Greek and the careful attention to detail needed to distinguish between varieties of possessive pronouns, and he discusses the difference between 'kiss' and 'adore'–he concedes that the two have similar sounds in Greek and uses that as an entry to a discussion of homonyms, synonyms and the construction of

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[15]E. Power, "Corrections from the Hebrew in the Theodulfian Mss of the Vulgate," *Biblica* 5(1924), 107; Contreni, *Learning*, I 14; Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952), 43.

[16]LC I.12, 161, "...for Joseph's tunic is not said to have been kissed by the father or gazed upon either in the Hebrew books or in the Latin, which have been translated from the Hebrew truth."

[17]LC I.13, 165, "Jacob adoring the head of Joseph's staff," " Behold, the Hebrew truth declares that the same patriarch adored God toward the head of the little bed. Behold, the library of the Latins announces that he adored either 'above the head of the staff' or 'on the head' or ' on the top' or 'above the top'."

different words from the same or similar roots.[18] He twice justifies interpretations by reference to the Biblical habit of using the past tense in place of the future, first quoting Jerome to give authority to the statement *"mos iste sit Scripturarum, ut interdum futura tempore praeterito declinentur"* and giving the Greek name of the device, prolempsis.[19] The second time, Theodulf expands on the device and defines it as expectation or anticipation, giving the Latin names:

> *"et est schema, quod prolempsis nuncupatur, id est praeoccupatio sive praesumptio, per quam ea, quae sequi debent, anteponuntur"*

and provides examples from Ezekiel and Psalm 28 (by way of Bede) before returning to the main thread of his argument about the Byzantine misinterpretation of a verse about destroyed cities.[20]

The philological urge shows too in the demand for clarity and consistency of meaning; words have fixed meanings which must not be shifted to suit the purposes of an interpreter, and words cannot be freely substituted for or equated to other words. Scripture in particular always uses carefully chosen words of precise meaning.

> *"Sancta vero scriptura ... puris, propriis, fixis, sive prudentibus semper verbis sive sententiis utitur."*[21]

The Byzantines cannot–as they do, says Theodulf–freely use '*habere*', '*salutare*', '*osculari*' and '*venerari*' for '*adorare*'.[22] Book I chapter 14, a lengthy condemnation of

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[18]LC I.13, 164 and LC IV.23, 546.

[19]LC I.1, 112, "...for that is a custom in the Scriptures, that sometimes future things are avoided by means of the past tense."

[20]LC I.28, 223, "There is also a device called *prolempsis*, that is *praeoccupatio* or *praesumptio*, through which things which ought to follow are placed before."

[21]LC I.9, 152; "But holy scripture always uses pure, proper, fixed or discreet words and meanings."

[22]LC I.9, 152.

their equating of '*adoratio*' and '*benedictio*', decries the way in which they distort meaning in their attempt to justify the adoration of images.[23] As Theodulf no doubt realized, if terms are not agreed upon, if words can arbitrarily acquire new meanings and uses, then the careful study of grammar and philology becomes pointless and, worse, the interpretations based on them become meaningless. He considers clear definitions to be essential–and nowhere more than in matters of faith, where salvation is at risk:

> "*multo magis fidei definitio dilucida et perspicua et omni ambiguitate sive tortuositate carens esse debet.*"[24]

Theodulf tries to provide precision in, for instance, his examination of the exact significance of the prefix '*con*', used by the Byzantines as part of '*conregnare*', linking Christ to the Byzantine rulers–shocking to Theodulf, or so he said, though standard usage to the easterners.[25] '*Con*', says Theodulf, is not, as the Byzantines claim, equal to '*simul*' in any of '*simul*'s' three senses (time, nature and genus). Theodulf proves his assertion by a careful analysis of all the possibilities for '*simul*'. With the simple meaning of 'at the same time' eliminated, Theodulf can go on to discuss issues of precedence and how God rules in us rather than with us. Later he discusses various words beginning with '*con*', '*consanguines*', '*consortes*', '*contribulum*', '*conformes*', to suggest that '*con*' means that certain diverse things cohere: "*diversa quaeque coherere demonstret.*"[26] Book

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[23]LC I.14, 167, "*Ut ergo imaginum adorationem, in quarum amore eorum mens pendet et totius sanctitatis propositum est, stabiliant, plurima verba vel sensus, quae ad aliud pertinent, in 'adorationem' mutare affectant,*" "Therefore, in order to support the adoration of images, the love of which their minds depend upon and in which they place all holiness, they attempt to change to 'adoration' several words or meanings which pertain to something else."

[24]LC III.3, 346, "... how much more ought a definition of faith to be clear and sharp, free from all ambiguity and complication."

[25]LC I.1, 105-115.

[26]LC III.5, 359.

III chapter 3 contains a long discussion of the precession of the Holy Spirit, centering on the difference between '*ex*' and '*per*', a demonstration of the weight and religious significance attached both to small, seemingly innocuous words and to the importance of precise grammatical and philological knowledge and skills.[27]

It is rather amusing, then, to contemplate Book IV chapter 1. Here Theodulf, in a discussion of the sentence uttered by the Byzantine presbyter John "*Qui adorat imaginem et dicit: quoniam hic est Christus Filius Dei, non peccat*," takes '*hic*' as a pronoun meaning 'this man' and excoriates the equation of 'this man' to Christ. The final sentence, however, in an abrupt anticlimax, acknowledges that '*hic*' may be used as an adverb as well as a pronoun, in which case there is nothing at all to be upset about. "*Haec sententia stare potest*"–the sentence, or opinion, may stand.[28] Book IV chapter 1 belongs to the uncorrected part of the LC; one wonders what the committee would have made of it had they got that far.

B. Rhetoric

Rhetoric stood second in the medieval trivium, placed there as one of the three arts of discourse by Isidore, who calls grammar the skill of speaking correctly, but rhetoric the skill of speaking well.[29] After considerable debate, Christianity, guided by Augustine in *De Doctrina Christiana*, accepted the necessity of rhetoric. As Augustine

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[27]LC III.3, 345-353.

[28]LC IV.1, 489-491, "... who adores an image and says: since this man is Christ the Son of God, he does not sin," becomes "...who adores an image and says: since Christ the Son of God is here, he does not sin.'

[29]"*Rhetorica est bene dicendi scientia.*" Isidore, bishop of Seville, *Etymologiarum Libri XX, PL LXXXVIII*, II.76.1. "*In grammatica enim scientia recte loquendi discimus.*" II.76.2.

noted, it is not enough merely to know the truth, one must also be able to communicate it.[30] Contreni points out that Carolingian teaching and use of rhetoric was directed toward other scholars, rather than the general laity, as part of understanding and explaining the intricate meanings of Scripture.[31] Beyond exposition and explanation, however, is persuasiveness, so that a reader will accept what is explained. Since, in the LC, Theodulf needs to persuade his readers of his own interpretation of just those intricacies, well developed rhetoric in the sense of a mastery of figures of speech and of techniques that leads to persuasiveness was of obvious use. Much of what Theodulf has to say about the interpretation of the figures, tropes and metaphors found in the Bible is better dealt with under interpretation. Here let us examine a few of the ways in which he employs rhetorical strategies intended to persuade.[32]

Theodulf frequently appeals directly to the reader's good sense. For instance, at the end of Book I chapter 24, he states that the foolishness of those who misapply "*vultum tuum*" to the faces of manufactured images "*non nobis est iudicandum, sed lectoris arbitrio reservandum.*"[33] The reader, by implication, is capable of his own intelligent judgement. Similarly, a careful reader ("*prudens lector*") will note how absurdly and incautiously Theodosius, bishop of Amoris anathematizes those who refuse to worship images.[34] The diligent reader ("*diligens lector*"), following the examples provided by Theodulf, will take care to investigate other examples and will see for himself how a

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[30]James J. Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 60; Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, Book IV, chapters 2, 10, 11.

[31]Contreni, "The Carolingian Renaissance: education and literary culture," 736.

[32]See Spiritual Interpretation, chapter 4, part C.

[33]LC I.24, 216, "... must not be judged by us, but kept for the judgement of the reader."

[34]LC III.7, 367.

church ought to be adorned.[35] In each case, Theodulf flatters his readers, calling them dutiful and cautious, and implying that they are–of course–capable of making intelligent judgements, which will–equally of course–coincide with his. He also professes concern for the reader, stressing how he omits further details in the interest of brevity and could, if he chose, provide a great deal more in support of his position: "*Sed haec breviter pro tempore dicta sufficiant*," "*sed brevitatis causa haec et his similia omittuntur*," and similar expressions emphasizing restraint recur frequently.[36]

Theodulf appeals not only to his readers but also to various authorities, in invocations which emphasize both the stature of an authority and Theodulf's ability to call upon him for support. An example of rhetorical flourish is an address to Daniel, which includes all of the qualifications that mark Daniel as an expert:

> "*Dic, ergo tu, sancte Daniel, dic vir desideriorum, dic scrutator archanorum, dic indagator Scripturarum, dic propheta, qui de Redemptore mundi in eo apertius ceteris dixisse probaris, quia non solum scribis eum esse venturum, quod est tibi commune cum ceteris, sed, quo tempore venturus sit, doces et reges per ordinem digeris et annos enumeras ac manifestissima signa praenuntias.*"[37]

Daniel then goes on to speak in the first person. "*Non in meo volumine hoc, inquam, fecisse me legis*," further heightens the drama and attributes the denial of the Byzantine position to a revered Biblical figure, not to Theodulf.[38] Many others invited to speak just

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[35]LC I.29, 231.

[36]LC I.2, 120, "Let these things, briefly said, suffice for now"; LC IV.23, 550, "But these and similar things are omitted for the sake of brevity."

[37]LC I.9, 153, "Therefore speak, holy Daniel, speak man of yearnings, speak examiner of mysteries, speak investigator of the Scriptures, speak prophet, you who are shown to have spoken in them more openly than others about the Redeemer of the world, since you not only write that He will come, which you have in common with others, but you teach when He will come and you set the kings in ranks and count the years and announce the clearest signs."

[38]LC I.9, 153, "you do not read this, I tell you, in my book."

as Daniel is–Paul, Augustine, Moses, Isaiah–in terms of fulsome admiration. Paul is addressed with "*Dic, vas electionis, dic, doctor gentium, quid sit imago Dei*," and Isaiah in

> "*Dic, quaeso, sancte Esias, dic, nobilissime vatum, dic, dominicae incarnationis et gentium vocationis evangelice potius quam prophetice narrator.*"[39]

Moses, like Daniel, is particularly well worth listening to:

> "*Dic, oro, sancte Moyses, dic, mitissime virorum, dic, vir nobilis et archanorum Dei strenue inspector, dic, vir clementissime et ineffabilis Dei fidelissime interpres, qui legem in monte peccatis contrariam et vitiis inimicam accipiens glorificata facie vultum intollerabilem peccatori populo adduxisti–ut sicut lex, quam deferebas, peccatis contraria erat, ita nimirum vultus tuus spectantibus terribilis esset–dic vir inclite, qui typum veri Redemptoris gerens Mediator inter Deum et homines extitisti.*"[40]

Other uses of apostrophe are more general and intended to cast ridicule on some assertion of the Byzantines: "O *inconveniens conparatio! O hebes coniectura! O stolidissima dictio!*" a series rising to a superlative, or

> "*O adulatio, quur tanta praesumis? O oleum rancoris potius exuberans nidorem quam lenitatis aut nectaris nitorem*"[41]

The latter example includes another of Theodulf's favorite tricks–the rhetorical question,

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[39]LC II.16,264, "Say, chosen vessel, say, teacher of the peoples, what the image of God is"; LC III.14, 397, "Speak, holy Isaiah, I ask you, speak, most renowned of prophets, speak, you who narrate evangelically rather than prophetically the Lord's incarnation and the ealling of the peoples."

[40]LC III.26, 461, "Speak, I pray, holy Moses, speak, gentlest of men, speak, noble man, actively an observer of God's mysteries, speak, most merciful man and most faithful interpreter of the ineffable God, whose face was glorified, who, receiving on the mountain the law opposed to sins and hostile to vices, brought forward a countenance unbearable to a sinful people–just as the law which you were carrying down was opposed to sins, so especially was your countenance terrible to onlookers–speak, famous man who, the type of the true Redeemer, stood forth as mediator between God and man."

[41]LC I.14, 167, "O unsuitable comparison! O dull conjecture! O most stupid speech!"; LC IV.20, 538, "O adulation, why do you take such great things for granted? O oil exuding the smell of rancour rather than the splendour of gentleness or nectar."

here aimed, as often, at underlining the excesses and absurdities of the Byzantines. Elsewhere, guiding his readers as always to the proper conclusions against the Byzantines he asks in apparent bewilderment,

> "*Quis ergo umquam sani capitis tale quid dixerit? Quis sanae mentis tale quid protulerit?*"

The reader's conclusion that of course no one of intelligence would do such things is more effective than a straightforward statement by Theodulf. Book III chapter 23, a discussion of the wide variety of mythological subjects used in painting is largely a series of rhetorical questions, covering several pages.

> "*Nonne, cum solem et lunam et cetera caeli ornamenta figuras hominum et capita radiis succincta habere fingunt, sanctis Scripturis modis omnibus contraeunt?*"... "*An non divinis Scripturis alienum est, quod Vulcani claudi et Terrae filius Ericthonius esse et in monte Ethna ferrum coquere eiusque fornax mons Besubius Campaniae esse fingitur, qui perpetuis ignibus ardere perhibetur?*"[42]

are typical examples. Here rhetorical questions present impressive lists of classical topics in a display of erudition to overwhelm readers.

A third form of address, aimed at those who might dispute Theodulf's statements, takes the form of admonishments to the Byzantines, pointing out their lack of skills and judgement. If some contentious ('*contentiosus*') someone wants to dispute Theodulf's interpretation of the prefix '*con*', let him first wipe the fog from his cloudy mind: "*perpendat abstersa nebulosae mentis caligine.*"[43] Or, in a direct challenge to those who

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[42]LC III.23, 442 and 443, "When they depict the sun and moon and other ornaments of heaven as having human forms and heads surrounded with rays, do they not contradict holy Scripture in every way?" ..."or is it not hostile to holy Scripture, that Erichthonius, son of Earth and lame Vulcan, is painted making iron in Mount Etna and that Mount Vesuvius in Campania, which is asserted to burn with perpetual fires, is painted as his furnace?"

[43]LC I.1, 110.

contend that material images are comparable to the Ark of the Covenant, "*inveniant, si queunt, opificem, qui Moysi meritis aequiperari queat.*"[44]

More interesting and skillfully varied is Theodulf's frequent use of parallelism and repetition combined with contrast and sometimes rhyme.[45] These statements, often lengthy, are controlled by pairs such as '*illi*'-'*isti*', '*aliud*'-*aliud*' or '*nos*'-*illi*', emphasized by balanced clauses. A relatively short example exploiting the contrast inherent in 'we-they' and opposed actions occurs at the beginning of Book II chapter 9, in a discussion of the statues of the ox and lion which Solomon added to the temple.

> "*Salomon in templo boves et leones legitur condidisse, quorum conditione nos, qui secundum Apostolum legem spiritalem esse scimus, quibusdam mysteriorum archanis instruimur, illi vero, qui imaginum adorationem diligunt, suae vaecordiae vanitatem firmare moliuntur; nos mysticis sensibus perdocemur, illi in sui erroris magnitudine firmantur; nos admoniti per umbram indagamus veritatem; illi decepti per rem bene gestam ad rem non gerendam sumunt auctoritatem.*"[46]

Another example, a strong and sustained use of this combination of techniques is found at the end of the second book, where Theodulf compares the errors of the Hiereia council and the Second Nicene Council, to the detriment of both.

> "*Illi* [the Hiereia council] *enim eas* [images] *convellendas atque contempnendas esse censuerunt ab ecclesia perpetua abdicatione, isti* [the Nicene council] *eas non solum habendas, verum etiam venerandas student subplici adoratione. Illi eas mancipavere crepitantibus ignibus, isti honorant*

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[44]LC II.26, 287, "Let them find, if they can, a workman who can be compared in his merits to Moses."

[45]For a discussion of this aspect of Theodulf's style see Dahlhaus-Berg, *Nova Antiquitas*, 146-160.

[46]LC II.9, 253, "We read that Solomon set up oxen and lions in the Temple, from whose condition we, who know according to the Apostle that the law is spiritual, are instructed in certain secrets of the mysteries, but they, who value the adoration of images, strive to strengthen the vanity of their madness; we are taught with mystic meanings, they are strengthened in the magnitude of their error; we are warned and investigate truth through shadow, they are deceived and, in the name of a deed well done, claim authority for a deed which must not be done."

> *odoriferis timiamatibus. Illi eas effugiebant etiam cernere, isti non cessant amplecti. Illi effodere ad ornamentum ecclesiae ab antiquis constitutas in parietibus, isti nuper conditas oblatis perlustrant luminaribus. Illi eas studebant prorsus abominari, isti sanciunt omnino osculari. Illi anathematizabant habentes, isti e contrario non adorantes.*"[47]

Theodulf changes the '*illi*'-'*isti*' pairing to '*hinc*'-'*illinc*' in the next lines and strengthens it with a third actor, '*nos*', we who accede neither to the one error nor the other, but hold the middle way,

> "*cum iustitia hinc severitatem, illinc adolationem comtempnentes, cum prudentia hinc versutiam, illinc hebitudinem declinantes, cum temperantia hinc libidinem, illinc sensibilitatem spernentes, cum fortitudine hinc timiditatem, illinc audaciam abicientes...,*"

claiming for the Carolingians the four cardinal virtues, in the balance between harmful extremes advocated by Aristotle, an effective piece of writing culminating in the familiar phrase "*qui est via veritas et vita*" and a humble acknowledgement of the need for His help.[48] Here Theodulf strengthens his rhetoric with an assumption of humility; in spite of being wiser than the others, 'we', the Carolingians, acknowledge our need for divine help. This piece of rhetoric closes the second book with the quiet but confident phrase "*ipso opitulante pervenire valeamus.*"[49]

Theodulf enlivens his work with metaphors, including many drawn from familiar

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[47]LC II.31, 327, "For that [Hiereia] council ordered that those [images] be destroyed and condemned in an everlasting renunciation by the church; this [Nicene] council desires not only that people have images but that they worship them in humble adoration. That council gave up images to crackling fires; this council, to fragrant incense. That one fled even from looking at images; this one does not cease to embrace them. That council tore away things set on the walls by men of old for the ornamentation of the church; this one illuminates things recently set up with lights brought forward. That council was eager that images be completely abominated; this one decrees that they be kissed completely. That council anathematized those who had images; this one, on the contrary, those who do not adore them."

[48]LC II.31, 328, "...with justice, despising severity on this side and adulation on that; with prudence, shunning cunning on this side and dullness on that; with temperance, spurning passion on this side and sensitivity on that; with fortitude, casting away timidity on this side and rashness on that..."

[49]LC II.31, 328, "...with His help, we are able to arrive."

Biblical imagery. One particularly striking and frequent metaphor is that given in the quotation above, the middle road, the path of moderation–"*recto tramite*" or "*viam mandatorum*"; it appears too as the "*via regia*" which 'we' hold or the "*veritatis rationis et discretionis tramite.*"[50] The exact phrasing varies, but the basic image remains, well grounded in such Biblical verses as Isaiah 30:21, "*haec via, ambulate in ea, non declinabitis ab ea neque ad dexteram neque ad sinistram*," quoted twice by Theodulf.[51] Another metaphor with Biblical overtones is that of food, whether as "*divini verbi manna puro et sano sensu suscipientes eius dulcibus aluntur alimentis*" or in

> "*Aut si forte illa rudimento conversionis suae, quae necdum solido cibo vesci poterat, ideo tenero cibo utebatur, ut ad percipiendum solidum cibum paulatim sumptis viribus cresceret, scilicet ut per rem visibilem et tractabilem ad invisibilis et ineffabilis Dei cultum accederet, quis eius in hoc facto imitator effectus spreta solidi cibi fortitudine ad infantiae denuo cibos cupiat esse redactus?*"[52]

The most common comparison, however, involves weapons and fighting, a theme easily found in the Bible, especially the Old Testament, and particularly appropriate to a people conscious of new prominence gained by military prowess and to scholars undertaking an aggressive defence of doctrine. At the beginning of the LC, Theodulf speaks of his pen, armed with the authority of the Scriptures, "*nostri stili divarum Scriptuarum auctoritate armati*"; a little later, it is a dagger and breastplate, "*Hoc quidem*

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[50]LC II.31, 327 and elsewhere, "the right path"; LC II.31, 327, "the way of the commandments"; LC Praef, 102, "the royal road"; LC II.27, 291, "the path of truth, reason and discretion."

[51]LC Praef, 102 and LC II.31, 327; Isaiah 30:21, " "Walk on this road; you will not turn aside from it either to the right or to the left."

[52]LC I.5, 131, "...receiving the manna of the divine word with pure and sound mind, they are nourished by his sweet foods"; LC IV.15, 526, "And if perhaps she, who at the beginning of her conversion could not yet use solid food, therefore used soft food, so that a little later when she had gained strength she would grow to receiving solid food–that is, she would approach a love of the invisible and ineffable God through visible and manageable things–who, having completed his imitation of her in this deed, wishes to be reduced to the food of infants again, spurning the strength of solid food?"

pugione lorica fidei munitus ecclesiae proeliator contra hostes fidei dimicavit."[53] If the Byzantines try to protect their wall of error with fortifications, "*erroris murum his temptent tueri munitionibus,*" then "*his a nobis eorum firmitatae arietibus, tantis veritatis quatietur impulsibus*"–we will shake it with the battering-rams of truth.[54] These and other devices and techniques of rhetoric are skilfully employed by Theodulf to strengthen his prose and thereby make it more persuasive, more effective in the ultimate goal of rousing his readers to the defence of the endangered church and correct doctrine. How effectively Theodulf uses his rhetorical techniques will be examined in chapter 6.

C. Dialectic

Theodulf made frequent use of dialectic or reasoning as a tool, particularly to organize and analyze, to pinpoint the properties of the element to be discussed or to isolate elements from a complex whole. An example of Theodulf's organization of his argument is his habit of breaking down of a question into parts, referred to in Chapter 1. Theodulf begins Book I chapter 17 by stating that each part of the chapter heading must be considered separately:

> "*totum hoc capitulum commatice est considerandum et per singula unicuique particulae respondendum, quoniam, quamquam ad unius erroris tendat propositum, ex multis tamen particulatim et erroribus conpaginatum.*"[55]

He then dissects the statement relating purple fringe on hems, memory of the laws,

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[53]LC Praef, 101; LC I.4, 127, "Indeed, protected by this dagger and by the breastplate of faith, the warrior fought against the enemies of the faith."

[54]LC II.22, 276.

[55]LC I.17, 182, "All of this chapter heading must be examined phrase by phrase and must be addressed in each individual particular since, although it tends to the proposition of one error, it is cobbled together out of many errors, one by one.

images and apostolic tradition and points out the errors in each phrase. The technique here applied on a small scale is the technique Theodulf applies to the whole *Acta*; he breaks them into small pieces and shows that the reasoning of the Second Nicene Council is so flawed in the details that the whole must be worthless.

An example of analysis occurs in the opening preface, where Theodulf differentiates between idols and images on the basis that an idol is a species and an image is a genus and images and idols are therefore not interchangeable.[56] Categories too are useful for analysis, especially in distinguishing the related concepts of image, likeness and sameness (*imago, similitudo, aequalitas*). These are, says Theodulf, simply three aspects of the category 'relationship', and, though thus connected, do not share all properties.

> "*Quae tria, quamquam unius sint categoriae, quae relatio dicitur, habent tamen inter se quasdam proprietates, quibus aliae carent.*"[57]

Although Theodulf has the thought of Aristotle available to him through Isidore, who discusses Aristotle's categories in Book 2 chapter XXVI of the *Etymologiae*, he further justifies his use of it by asserting that philosophical methods, like anything else that can be studied, can be found in the Bible. To justify his assertion he paraphrases and extends Isidore's description of the tools of philosophy found in the Bible:

> "*Illic[in Scripturis divinis] quoque inveniet isagogas, quae ad inquirendas res lectorem utiliter introducunt, categorias, quae praedicamentorum*

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[56]LC Praef, 99, "*... imaginem esse genus, idolum vero speciem et speciem ad genus, genus ad speciem referri non posse. Nam cum pene omne idolum imago sit, non omnis imago idolum.*," "...image is a genus, but idol is a species, and a species cannot be referred to a genus, nor a genus to a species. For almost every idol is an image, but not all images are idols."

[57]LC I.8, 146, "These three concepts, although they belong to one category, which is called relationship, nevertheless have among themselves certain properties which the others lack."

utilitate ad investigandas res excellunt; definitiones vel modos syllogismorum, quae subtili indagatione ea, de quibus dubitatur, adfirmant."[58]

Theodulf's learning, as Freeman demonstrates. extends to frequent use of syllogisms.[59] Theodulf employs syllogistic reasoning in many places in his arguments, assuming the negative, tracing the logical consequences and showing that these are contradictory or untrue and that therefore the original assumption is wrong. Yet many scholars in the seventh and eighth centuries were wary of logic. Indeed, reasoning and dialectic were considered dangerous, particularly by the Irish scholars; syllogisms were regarded with some suspicion as a Greek device.[60] Nevertheless, knowledge of dialectic and approval of its use had survived from classical times; dialectic had in fact authorization from the most respectable figures. Augustine earlier approved cautious use of pagan intellectual methods and even wrote a treatise on dialectic; Martianus Capellus in the fifth century had included dialectic as one of the seven arts. Most important for Theodulf and his colleagues was the link from Aristotle through Boethius and Cassiodorus to Isidore, whose *Etymologiae*, that most useful encyclopedia, included dialectic. In particular, Alcuin, Theodulf's colleague, was studying the philosophical and logical works of Boethius and Apuleius.

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[58]LC II.30, 314, "There (in the divine Scriptures) one also finds isagoge, which usefully introduces the reader to things to be examined, categories, which excel for investigating things through the usefulness of qualities, definitions or methods of syllogisms, which by subtle investigation strengthen doubtful things."

[59]Freeman, "Einleitung", 55-56.

[60]Riché, "Divina Pagina," 730. On early medieval logic, see, generally, the remainder of Riché's article and John Marenbon, *From the Circle of Alcuin to the School of Auxerre* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1994), especially pages 1-66, and "Carolingian Thought," *Carolingian Culture: emulation and innovation*, Rosamond McKitterick, editor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 171-192.

Theodulf uses syllogisms to distinguish truth from falsity, the primary purpose of dialectic, according to Isidore:

> "*Docet enim in pluribus generibus quaestionum quemadmodum disputando vera et falsa dijudicentur.*"[61]

Theodulf includes syllogisms, more than thirty of them by Freeman's count, in chapters throughout the LC.[62] Many have the basic form: if A, then B, if B, then C; not C, therefore not A. In Theodulf's syllogisms, one proposition leads to another and then another, until one can be declared false and thus falsify the original proposition. For instance, if God lacks something, then He needs something; if He needs something, He is not omnipotent. But He is omnipotent, therefore He lacks nothing and–the point of this example–He never asks for anything.[63] Or, in another example, consider the proposition that emperors are similar to apostles. If emperors are indeed similar to apostles, then they are also greater than prophets, who did not see Christ in the flesh, although they knew he was coming. So, if emperors are greater than prophets, then they see Christ in the flesh. But they do not see Christ in the flesh. Therefore, emperors are not greater than prophets and not similar to apostles.[64]

The key in such syllogisms is of course the assumptions. Does B follow inevitably from A; is C unequivocally false? In the first example, for instance, both Theodulf and his opponents could accept without question the statement that God was omnipotent; to them it was self-evident. In the second, however, perhaps emperors might

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[61]Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 2.22, col 140, ""For it teaches how, in several varieties of questions, true and false things are distinguished by arguments."

[62]Freeman, "Einleitung," 55-56.

[63]LC I.4, 125.

[64]LC IV.20, 538.

be similar to apostles in some way other than being greater than prophets or emperors might be greater than prophets in some way other than seeing Christ in the flesh. The word 'similar' might be more rigorously examined, just as Theodulf earlier examines other concepts (such as '*similitudo*') with reference to categories, species and genus.

Another syllogism runs as follows: if an unsuitable ordination (the reference is to Tarasius) can be strengthened by the unsuitable adoration of images, then illicit (i.e. forbidden) things can easily be supported by illicit things. Then impure things can be washed clean by impure things–but they cannot be so washed. Therefore Tarasius cannot strengthen his (shaky) position by supporting the adoration of images.[65] There are assumptions here which a western audience might accept but an eastern one reject. The Byzantines considered Tarasius a proper patriarch, properly installed; to the participants in the Second Nicene Council he was not unsuitable, nor was he promoting unsuitable adoration of images, merely proper veneration. The leaps from unsuitable to illicit to impure things are also wide; the three are not the same. The use of dialectic seems uneven; the syllogisms are stated simply, but the connections of one statement to the next are not rigorously analysed with full use of the concepts provided by Isidore's and Aristotle's categories. Marenbon suggests that Theodulf was interested not in the "philosophical implications" of logic, but in an "ostentatious way of setting out arguments."[66] Such a use of logic would make its function primarily rhetorical or persuasive, in keeping with Boethius' description of dialectic as presenting readily

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[65]LC III.2, 342.

[66]John Marenbon, *From the Circle*, 35 and "Alcuin, the Council of Frankfort and the Beginnings of Medieval Philosophy," *Das Frankfurter Konzil von 794*, Rainier Berndt, editor (Mainz: Selbstverlag der Gesellschaft für Mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte, 1997), 608.

believable arguments, not necessarily logically sound ones.[67]

Theodulf thus had the means to organize and present his knowledge and interpretations, and He could express himself correctly (given a little help to bring his spelling in line with the official standard), he knew the techniques of persuasion, and he could attack the logical flaws in an argument. The availability of just such tools of learning is one of the factors central to the creation of the LC. What Theodulf accepted as knowledge, however, and how he reached his interpretations are another and very different factor. Some of the assumptions underlying the content of the LC form the subject of the next chapter.

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[67]Eleonore Stump, "Dialectic," *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages*, David A. Wagner, editor (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 127.

Chapter 4. The Principles of Scholarship

As part of his argument against using books of unknown authorship as authorities, Theodulf sets out certain principles about the scrutiny of doctrines and authorities which seem to close off all further debate about what or who may properly be invoked in an argument. In fact, however, the principles raise questions about the concepts which underlie them. Let us begin consideration of these concepts with a close examination of Book IV chapter 11.[1]

Book IV chapter 11 carries the heading

> "*Quod illi libri Gestorum patrum, quorum auctores ignorantur, non prorsus idonei sint ad testimonia danda et ad haec, quae in contentionem veniunt, adfirmanda.*"[2]

The thesis of the chapter, generalized from the heading, is that contentious issues cannot be decided through an appeal to other dubious things. Only that which has already been established may be adduced in an argument. Such a statement, however, leads naturally to the questions of what has been established and how and by whom, and how such established truths may be recognized. Theodulf begins his answer to these questions with the statement that apostolic teaching advises us to test all things and keep what is good, a reference to I Thess 5:21.[3] We must not, however, interpret this Biblical verse literally, because if we were to test truly everything, we would necessarily do some things which are forbidden. Here, as elsewhere, Theodulf insists that the proper method of exegesis is

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[1] LC IV.11, 512-514.

[2] LC IV.11, 512, "that those books of deeds of the fathers whose authors are unknown are wholly unsuitable for bearing witness and for confirming contentious matters." Theodulf is not referring to any particular deeds or fathers, but rather to any–and all–such books whose authors are unknown.

[3] "*Omnia probare, et ea quae bona sunt, retinere.*" LC IV.11, 512.

spiritual; that is, in this case, doctrines and writings must be tested in the mind. All doctrines must be examined, and all writings and books which hold these doctrines, including, of course, the books of the deeds of the fathers, referred to in the chapter heading. But since there are so many and such varied books and since the obscurity of some of their authors is worrisome, we must fall back on the instructions of Gelasius and other fathers about what is acceptable and trustworthy. Here Theodulf names some of his authorities–Gelasius, Jerome, and "authors accepted by the holy, catholic and apostolic church." Questions thus immediately arise: who are those other authors and what, precisely, is the holy, catholic and apostolic church?

Theodulf does not pause to answer these questions; he merely states that the Byzantines have not been using properly approved sources, behaviour particularly deplorable since religious matters require particularly scrupulous standards of care. We rarely accept testimony from worthless or unknown people in human affairs, and we should be even more careful when dealing with heavenly matters.[4]

At this point, Theodulf introduces the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) in which the servant is rebuked by his master for hiding the money entrusted to him. The parable is now usually interpreted to mean that one should make full use of one's gifts, not hide them away, but Theodulf has another interpretation. He says that the rebuke is earned not by failure to use the coin, but by failure to have it tested; it should have been handed to the money changers, who carefully examine all coins given to them. Money

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[4]LC IV.11, 513, "*multo minus in tantis rebus, quae caelestis magisterii eruditione indigent, incognitorum doctorum aut apochrifarum scriptuarum testimonia sunt admittenda*," "...how much less, in such great affairs which need the learning of heavenly teachers, should the testimony of unknown teachers or apocryphal writings be admitted."

changers check coins in four ways: is the metal of the best quality; is the purity of the metal maintained throughout the coin, not just on the surface; is the coin produced by the king or by some tyrant; does the coin match standard coins in weight? Theodulf transforms each of these tests on a coin into a test for doctrines or written works and draws out principles applicable to scholarship. First, a text must display clear spiritual understanding (the best gold) capable of illuminating divine law and enhancing the church. Second, there must be no heretical teachings contained in the text (gold clear through.) Third, the doctrine must come from God, not the devil, or, as Theodulf puts it, 'the old enemy' (no counterfeiters.) Fourth and finally, the contents of the text must be in exact agreement with Biblical teachings, neither incomplete nor enlarged (conforming to the exact weight of the standard.) Application of these tests produces a body of written works that can be relied upon in the search for truth.

Here then, in a chapter centred on the allegorical interpretation of a Biblical text, Theodulf presents his principles for Biblical scholarship: spiritual interpretation combined with recognized authority and tradition, binding on all future writers. Theodulf himself adheres to these principles throughout the LC and severely chastises the Byzantines for what he sees as their failure to do so. When wielded by Theodulf, his principles are remarkably helpful in proving his points and disproving his opponents'. He is, in effect, stating his own rules and disqualifying those who do not follow them. Book IV chapter 11 is an explicit statement of how Theodulf judges the truth or acceptability of the various statements from the *Acta* upon which he comments. There does not seem to be a great deal of room for manoeuvre–a doctrine or statement is set against already

approved standards and summarily accepted or rejected.

Nevertheless, disruptive issues are implicit in this chapter, issues which, if examined, show some of the deep divisions within a church supposed to be unified, divisions partly responsible for the differences between the Carolingian and Byzantine churches and thus, among other results, the creation of the LC itself. There are problems inherent in the application of the principles Theodulf sets out as basic to his thinking; how fixed were his principles, how widely agreed upon and by whom? Three issues in particular, first, the concept of the Church, second, tradition and authority, and third, spiritual interpretation, call for further investigation into how was each understood by the scholars of the early Carolingian Renaissance and how was each expressed in the LC.

A. The Carolingian Concept of the Church

Theodulf relied on the church to authorize authority, so to speak, that is, to declare which authors might be quoted usefully, which authors were recognized by the holy, catholic and apostolic church. What did Theodulf mean by this phrase, "holy, catholic and apostolic," which he never explicitly defined? What did he perceive the church to be? Part of the difficulty in elucidating his mental picture lies in the distinction between the ideal Church, a simple, single entity composed of devout Christians in complete accord about doctrine, ritual and organization, and the reality of sincere but diverse groups and individuals who agreed in varying and changeable degrees about the elements of their faith. The church was both a body of believers whose spiritual beliefs engaged their minds and a mundane institution, all of whose members, including its highest

officials, had physical desires and controlled worldly possessions. Theodulf speaks of the Church in the singular and churches in the plural and probably evokes for himself and his readers two different images when he does so. When he speaks of the Church conferring authority on a writer or doctrine, he speaks in the singular, invoking a single, all-encompassing Church, yet the individual authorities supposedly so designated may have only local or disputed authority.

Some of the ways modern scholars have interpreted Carolingian views of the church may help clarify Theodulf's own views as expressed in the LC. Morrison suggests that the patristic fathers provided a model of the Church which stated its theological position but did not give an adequate basis for considering its role as part of the mundane world, a role, moreover, constantly increasing throughout the Middle Ages as the church acquired or tried to acquire control of such things as marriage, property and inheritance. The Fathers handed down an image of the Church as the body of Christ, "a spiritual community living in the world," but independent of the political structures of that world.[5] This Church gave access to God and ultimately salvation, as the Fathers said, but the church also, as an institution, functioned as an ordinary administrator organizing and defining that access with bureaucratic rules and hierarchies. This role too required a basis, one which the Franks lacked. They did not, Morrison says, fully form their concepts of ecclesiastical law or of the opposing possibilities of conciliar and papal supremacy until the mid-ninth century. Meanwhile, however, the early Carolingians began the process by collecting and studying papal decretals, council canons and Roman

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[5]Morrison, *The Church, Reform and Renaissance*, 141.

law.[6] Kings held power in church affairs; there was no clear division between government and religion, rather, what Morrison calls a "functional dualism" existed.[7]

Nelson sees the Frankish church as a sacramental institution with advisory functions, consulted on issues and methods of government, and providing models from the historical examples of the Old Testament, which emphasize justice and judgement as social controls.[8] Wallace-Hadrill also emphasizes Old Testament models of kingship which both gave the king power and held him responsible for the moral well-being of the kingdom, blending spiritual ideals with social function.[9] McKitterick examines the church as a means of carrying through Carolingian religious and didactic reform, directed toward building "an unequivocally Christian realm."[10] Ganz suggests that the Carolingian conception of the church involved public group activity, wherein bishops assembled before rulers and expressed the "collective national faith," an image which suggests a regional aspect, like Peter Brown's "separate micro-Christendoms," each of which believed that it held the complete Christian tradition.[11]

Delogu places the idea of administrative function within the context of papal-Byzantine imperial developments, in which the emperor and his administrators saw the

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[6]Morrison, *The Church, Reform and Renaissance*, 151.

[7]Karl Morrison, *The Two Kingdoms: ecclesiology in Carolingian political thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), especially 5-34.

[8]Janet Nelson, "Kingship and Royal Government," *The New Cambridge Medieval History vol II c. 700-900*, Rosamond McKitterick, editor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 422-3.

[9]J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, "The Via Regia of the Carolingian Age," *Trends in Medieval Political Thought*, Beryl Smalley, editor (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), 22-41.

[10]Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Church*, xv.

[11]David Ganz, "Theology and the Organization of Thought," *The New Cambridge Medieval History vol II c. 700-900*, Rosamond McKitterick, editor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 783; Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1995), 218.

Roman church as part of the imperial administration with the pope as merely one more high official, while the pope fought for independence by encouraging the western churches which were outside imperial control. The church had, according to Delogu, two problems: to "redefine the whole character of the universal Church without the central role of the emperor" and to organize its political structure. The popes directed more attention to the western churches which were outside the empire, especially the Frankish, and here collided with the Franks' own notions and experiences of the church.[12] In other words, conditions were changing and with them no doubt the Franks' image of their church, whether universal or local.

The above views of the Church concern its functions within the world and are attempts to understand how Carolingians reconciled the concepts of Church and churches or simply dealt with the church. Henry, however, has written an article contrasting the images, that is, metaphors, used by Greeks and Carolingians for thinking about the Church, as shown in the *Acta* of the Second Nicene Council and the LC.[13] Both, he says, saw the Church as a family, but where the Greeks could take from that image the idea of the prodigal son welcomed back, the Carolingians saw family honour stained beyond recovery. To the Carolingians, the Church was incorruptible.

A complicating factor is the Frankish view of themselves as the new chosen people, accorded a special place of leadership within the Church or entitled to such a

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[12]Paolo Delogu, "The Papacy, Rome and the Wider World in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries," *Nascita dell'Europa ed Europa carolingia: un'equazione da verificare*, Settimane di studio del centro Italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo XXVIII (Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro, 1981), 212-213.

[13]Patrick Henry, "Images of the Church in the Second Nicene Council and in the Libri Carolini," *Law, Church and Society*, Kenneth Pennington and Robert Somerville, editors ([Philadelphia]: University of Pennsylvania Press, Inc., 1977), 237-252.

place or even required to assume it as a duty. Haspel argues that a view of themselves as the new Israelites was common among the Franks from the time of Clovis' baptism (though not necessarily acknowledged by the predominately Gallo-Roman writers or clergy of the time) and came to the fore with the rise of Pippin.[14] The parallel is made explicit in certain poems of Angilbert and Alcuin, which use the name 'David" for Charlemagne; Charlemagne himself in the *Admonitio Generalis* takes Joshua as his model.[15] Papal need for the Franks led them to endorse these views in various letters, and the Franks might well accept the praise without pausing to consider the forces and motives behind the papal indentification.[16]

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[14]Thomas W. Haspel, *The Image of the Chosen People in the Carolingian Period: an exploration of a sacred social symbol*, MA dissertation (San Francisco State University, 1984), 33-38; Ute-Renate Blumenthal, "Introduction," *Carolingian Essays*, Ute-Renate Blumenthal, editor (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1983), vii; Angilbert, "To Charlemagne and his Entourage," and Alcuin, "On the Court", both in *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance*, Peter Godman (London: Duckworth, 1985), 112-121.

[15]"*nam legimus in regnorum libris, quomodo sanctus Iosias regnum sibi a Deo datum circumeundo, corrigendo, ammonendo, ad cultum veri Dei studuit revocare. Non ut me eius sanctitate aequiperabilem faciam, sed quod nobis sunt ubique sanctorum semper exempla sequenda, et quoscumque poterimus, ad studium bonae villae, in laudem et in gloriam domini nostri Iesu Christi, conregnare necesse est.*" *Admonitio Generalis*, 54, "For we read in the books of the kingdoms how holy Joshua applied himself to recalling the kingdom given to him by God to the love of the true God, by visiting, correcting, warning. Not so that I make myself comparable to him in holiness, but because we ought always everywhere to follow the example of the saints however we can, in the pursuit of a good life, it is necessary to reign in the praise and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

[16]For instance, Paul I writing to Pippin: "*Dum divinarum Scriptuarum historias in nostri memoriali revolvimus, et diversorum Dei electorum merita perpendimus, et vestrae divinae inspirationis studia in nostrae mentis intuitu conferentes, novum te gentes Moysen in his diebus refulgisse, praecellentissime fili et spiritalis compater, comperimus. Ille, quidem, ut Israeliticum populum ex affligentium erurent oppressionibus, a divina majestate praecepta suscepit. Tu quoque, praecellentissime atque eximie rex, ad liberandam sanctam universalem catholicam et apostolicam Dei Ecclesiam, divinitus es inspiratus.*" Paul I, Epp III, *Epistolae (PL LXXXIX)*, col 1139, "When we contemplate the stories of the divine Scriptures and consider the merits of the various people chosen by God, bringing a study of your divine inspiration into the view of our mind, we again discover that you shone as the people of Moses in these days, most eminent son and spiritual sponsor. He indeed, so that he might pluck the Israelite people out of the oppressions of those injuring them, received commands from the divine majesty. You too, most eminent and outstanding king, have been divinely inspired to liberate the holy, catholic, universal and apostolic church."

Charlemagne, in the *Admonitio Generalis* and *De Litteris Colendis* shows that his view of the situation places him in a position of general supervision of ecclesiastical affairs throughout his kingdoms, a view likely to be found again in an official court document such as the LC. The *De Litteris Colendis* contains the phrase "*episcopia et monasteria nobis, Christo propitio, ad gubernandum commissa*," and the *Admonitio Generalis* opens with

> "*Ego, Carolus, gratia Dei eiusque misericordia donante, rex et rector regni Francorum, et devotus sanctae aeclesiae defensor humilisque adiutor.*"[17]

in which Charlemagne connects his office of king with his protection of the church.

Theodulf's preface opens the LC with a long description of the Church, its problems and its activities: the Church is our mother, the anointed and beloved bride of Christ; she is sometimes troubled by war; she is an ark containing the souls of the saved and riding out storms; she sings, prays and teaches incessantly; she is a holy mother, immaculate, splendid, uncorrupted, fruitful; she neither loses her virginity nor ceases to produce sons; the more she is struck by the adversities of the world, the more she increases in authoritative or excellent virtues, and the more she is degraded, the more greatly she is exalted.[18] Theodulf couples his description of a Church often in trouble, under assault from within and without, with a statement of her need for Charlemagne (in whose name the LC are written) to come to her defense. The first image he presents then (the opening words of the entire LC are "*ecclesia mater nostra*") is that of a wonderful,

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[17]Charlemagne, *De Litteris Colendis*, *MGH Legum Tomus I* (Hannoverae: 1835), 52, "the sees and monasteries entrusted to us for governing with Christ's help"; *Admonitio Generalis*, 53, "I, Charles, by the grace and compassion of God, king and ruler of the Franks, and devoted defender and humble helper of the holy church...."

[18]LC Praef., 98.

incomparable, nourishing institution under constant attack and in constant need of help. This image is followed immediately by the image of the Franks, aware of their duty–to their mother, a duty required both by Frankish tradition and by divine commandment. Such a duty is owed by all who have received her care, says Theodulf,

> "*Quod [in ecclesiae defensione et ob eius exaltationem] quidem non solum nobis ... sed etiam cunctis ab eius uberibus enutritis sollicite observandum est*"

even as he shows the Franks striving with all their might against those who are undutiful.[19] The image of the Church in danger is paired with the image of the Franks, if not chosen, at least standing out because of their superior recognition of proper behaviour; the image of the powerful but struggling mother Church becomes a foil for the virtue of the Franks.

The adjectives most frequently applied to the Church are '*sancta*', '*catholica*'(which Theodulf says is the Greek equivalent of '*universalis*'), '*universalis*', and '*apostolica*'.[20] The dominant characteristics in his mind are then first, holiness, emphasized and amplified by his other references to the Church as the body of Christ, next, its enveloping, all-encompassing nature, and finally, its foundation and tradition, represented by the apostles and their direct connection with Christ.

The Church must be unified, and therefore anything or anyone who threatens that unity (i.e., heresy/heretics or schism/schismatics) is the object of deserved reproach. The first mention of the Byzantines in the LC criticizes their ambition and their desire for

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[19]LC Praef., 98, "Indeed, this [defense and exaltation of the church] must be carefully attended to not only by us but also by all those nourished by her richness."

[20]'*catholica*', LC III.4, 357.

praise which caused them to "*discinda[re] vinculum ecclesiasticae unitatis*"–cleave asunder the bond of ecclesiastical unity.[21] There is only one right belief leading to salvation; lack of unity therefore means error on someone's part. At the same time, however, Theodulf recognizes that the members of the Church may come from "*diversis gentibus*."[22] He sometimes speaks of the church of our region; for instance, he says that our church never withdrew from communion with Rome, here opposing the Frankish church to heretics such as Arians, or that Gregory the Great helped the "church of our region" ("*nostrae partis ecclesiam*") in a dispute about images.[23] The Church then, although portrayed as an entity in such images as mother or Christ's body, may function on earth in discrete parts. The latter aspect leads directly to the question of the worldly or administrative side of the church, the reality of its composition of diverse peoples and numerous bishops and unclear or disputed lines of authority. The two concepts of the church are in constant tension.

If the Church is indeed a single unit with one mind, then any part may reasonably speak for the whole. If, however, many regional churches, differing one from another, exist, then the question of who speaks for the whole is more difficult. Theodulf asserts early on (LC I..6) that the support of Rome is essential for any truly ecumenical council. He ends (LC IV.28) by again discussing in different terms the proper constitution of an ecumenical council. Book I chapter 6 affirms the position of the bishop of Rome. The chapter heading reads

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[21]LC Praef., 99.
[22]LC IV.18, 533.
[23]LC I.6, 135; LC II.23, 278.

"Quod sancta Romana, catholica, et apostolica ecclesia ceteris ecclesiis praelata pro causis fidei, cum quaestio surgit, omnino sit consulenda."[24]

The chapter supports the assertion with references to the primacy of apostolically founded churches and to the clear deference of the other apostolic churches to Rome and its founder, the leading apostle Peter. It further bolsters Rome's position by noting the additional connection with Paul. Later authorities such as Augustine and Jerome are cited as confirming this position.[25] The picture is one of numerous churches in a clear hierarchy that determines the ultimate authority. Here Theodulf appears to take a stand on theological and traditional grounds in the vexatious matter of church government. The chapter concludes, however, with references to Frankish kings and to the Frankish people who have supported Rome steadfastly and notes the extent of the power and territory they bring to bear, implying that this too is significant for Rome's position and should also be considered.[26]

The heading of Book III chapter 11 begins "*Quod inutiliter et incaute Graeci ecclesiam catholicam anathematizare conanti sint in eo synodo*" and goes on to say that they ought to have consulted the churches of the provinces before doing so[27]. The church of one part (and that not even founded by an apostle) must not, cannot, condemn the churches of the rest of the world on its own authority and initiative. Theodulf here presents a picture of recognizably separate churches, all of which must be allowed a say

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[24]LC I.6, 132, "that the holy, Roman, catholic and apostolic church, preferred to other churches for affairs of faith, absolutely must be consulted when a question arises."

[25]LC I.6, 132-135.

[26]LC I.6, 132-137.

[27]LC III.11, 375, "that injuriously and heedlessly in that synod the Greeks attempted to anathematize the catholic church."

in anything affecting the Church. Primacy of apostolic position is important, but all must be involved. In the final chapter of the LC, the universality of a council is said to require the participation of all those who have not withdrawn from unity; only heretics, who have explicitly disowned unity with separate meetings, may be ignored. The final chapter goes further, denying the universality of the Second Nicene Council not only on the grounds that it lacked the participation of all churches, but also on the grounds that it lacked the undisturbed purity of the universal faith:

> "*cum neque universalis fidei inconvulsam habeat puritatem neque per universarum ecclesiarum gesta constet auctoritatem.*"[28]

These are frustrating statements; Theodulf does not name precisely the conditions which would have fulfilled the requirements of pure faith and wide participation or how they should be arrived at or who should agree to them. Each group wishing to behave as the Second Nicene Council did would undoubtedly claim ecumenicity for itself. Indeed, Theodulf goes on to say that a few bishops can constitute a universal council if–and only if–they follow old rules and admit no novelties whatsoever into belief, now invoking tradition and judging ecumenicity by the decisions of the council, not by its participants.[29] But the recognition of newness varied–the Second Nicene Council saw itself as restoring what the Hiereia council had overthrown.

Theodulf's comparison of the First and Second Nicene Councils contrasts the two councils in order to show that they are in no way equal and that the ecumenicity granted

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[28]LC IV.28, 557, "since it is agreed that it had neither undisturbed purity of the universal faith nor authority from deeds of universal churches."

[29]LC IV.28, 557-558.

to the first does not extend to the second.[30] The differences, however, are mainly those of activity and decisions, those of the first council being judged beneficial to the Church and those of the second being judged harmful. The only attention to the composition of the council is to the number of bishops attending, not to their quality or their home provinces.[31] Sieben suggests that in chapers 11 and 12 of Book III Theodulf is presenting a new concept of the quality of universality for councils (in spite of his contempt for and often expressed rejection of novelty.) Sieben employs the concepts of vertical and horizontal consent to a council, both being necessary for universality.[32] Vertical consent comes from tradition and authority; a council's actions must be in agreement with those of the Bible and accepted writers, especially the Fathers. Horizontal consent refers to other churches; the question is whether those churches are the old pentarchy or–as the Carolingians are claiming and is now more realistic–a majority of all churches. The Carolingians contend that on the basis of their own disagreement with the Second Nicene Council, the requirement for horizontal consent is not met. In addition, the attack throughout the LC on the citations in the *Acta* attempts to prove that vertical consent is also lacking.

It is easy to accuse Theodulf of putting forward a double standard–you must consult us but we need not consult you–justified by the superior virtue and right belief he attributes to the Franks. But his problem is not simple: an institution which is conceived

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[30]LC IV.13, 515-522.

[31]LC IV.13, 515-522. The second council has twelve fewer participants than the first, a number considered significant because of the associations of twelve and its factors–two, three, four and six–three fold love, four body humours, twelve months and so on.

[32]Hermann Josef Sieben, *Die Konzilsidee der Alten Kirche* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöingh, 1979), 306-343.

of as undivided and indivisible and which asserts that there can be only one right belief is itself claimed by more than one group proclaiming its belief the right one. Possible solutions are to split the institution so that each group has its own institution or to admit of more than one right belief, but these solutions contradict the basic concept and require change in fundamental beliefs. Neither solution is easily arrived at; neither would have been conceivable for Theodulf and his contemporaries. What in fact they were slowly moving toward, in spite of themselves, driven by tension between the ideal of unity and the reality of different churches affected by different local conditions, was a *de facto* split which they could not bring themselves formally to acknowledge.

Meanwhile, the question of who spoke for the whole was still unsettled and unsettling. Morrison sees western Christians as having to choose between supreme authorities (here on earth) within the church. Rome, he says, had a simple solution: Rome represents universality.[33] Theodulf did not accept this idea, in spite of his statements in Book I Chapter 6; he considered Rome's consent necessary but not sufficient. He did not pose the problem as it was later posed by the Franks, a choice between pope and council, but he did consider the problem of the locus of authority. His equivocal answer–the pope must be consulted but councils acquire universality if their results are judged to be in agreement with earlier doctrines–only opens space for further dispute. Theodulf must think in universal terms to find answers valid for all time and the whole Church, as befits an unchanging and unified Church, while simultaneously condemning the Second Nicene Council and making provision for the validity of regional

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[33]Karl Morrison, *Tradition and Authority in the Western Church 300-1140* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 155-167; see too Delogu, "The Papacy, Rome and the Wider World," 108.

councils, such as the forthcoming Frankish council of Frankfort, already in the planning stages. Furthermore, universality had an immediate importance as one of the criteria invoked in the recognition and use of tradition and authority.

B. Tradition and Authority

The Carolingian concept of the Church included a commitment to certain perceptions of tradition and authority, perceptions important to Theodulf's principles of scholarship. Tradition and authority are closely related; tradition helps determine which authorities should be consulted, but those authorities in turn cumulatively and imperceptibly change tradition by their reception, interpretation and transmission of what has come to them as tradition. The deference paid to tradition arises from the feeling that the present is a degeneration of the past, that at some time before the present, standards were better and knowledge was greater. For Christians, that time was the time of the Incarnation, and the genuine tradition was the one reflecting the time of Christ, without modification.[34]

The word 'tradition', however, presents difficulties, since it is used above in three senses. The first is that tradition which Christians see as the unchanged collection of authentic teachings of Christ or capital T-Tradition; the second is what has been done

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[34]See, generally, Morrison, *Tradition and Authority*; Yves Congar, *Tradition and Traditions*, translated by Michael Naseby and Thomas Rainborough (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967); Albert C. Outler, "The Idea of 'Development' in the History of Christian Doctrine: a comment," *Schools of Thought in the Christian Tradition*, Patrick Henry, editor (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 7-14; Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300) volume 3 of The Christian Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); Robert L. Wilken, *The Myth of Christian Beginnings* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1971).

before, or is thought to have been done before, that is, the accumulated teachings and practices of the ancestors, believed by the Carolingians and their contemporaries to be the same as Tradition, but not; the third is tradition as an entity carrying the status and function of an authority within the church, rather than merely a body of beliefs and practices.

Authentic Tradition was considered to have come from Christ himself, passed on directly to the apostles (hence, the positions claimed by the churches founded by apostles, such as Rome) and thence unchanged to their successors, and its proper possessor was the Church.[35] In the beginning it was handed down orally, but eventually documents came to be seen as necessary for proof. Unwritten tradition retained its legitmacy, but written evidence was more easily validated.[36] Theodulf makes no reference to oral tradition in his discussion of acceptable authority in Book IV chapter 11; he considers only the written word. Tradition was accessible through a series of written works declared authoritative and therefore, as Theodulf saw it, conclusive in arguments.

Tradition was passed on and guaranteed by succession, as one bishop followed another in a well-ordered transfer of power. The emphasis on succession as part of the basis for Tradition accounts for some of the consequences Theodulf imputes to the Second Nicene Council's rejection of the 754 council of Hiereia; the participants of 754 were the fathers, in at least the spiritual sense, of the participants of the Second Nicene Council. To reject the teachings of the previous generation was to break the succession

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[35]Congar, *Tradition and Traditions*, 33.

[36]Congar, *Tradition and Traditions*, 87 and 47.

and thereby endanger or negate the transmission of Tradition.

> "*Qui* [participants in the Hiereia council] *si heretici fuere, neque consecrationes faciendi neque manus inponendi potestatem habuerunt. Qui si hanc non habuerunt, hi* [participants in the Nicene council] *qui ab eis hanc se accepisse putant, neque consecrationem neque manus impositionem habent.*"[37]

If the fathers had not possessed the authentic Tradition, they could not pass it on, and therefore their sons and successors did not possess it.

Another criterion for recognition of authentic Tradition is unanimity; that is, all the churches within the Church agree on Scripture and its interpretation.[38] But by 790 the churches had long since diverged. Brown speaks of "separate micro-Christendoms" each holding what it considered to be the complete Christian Tradition; in reality, each had a tradition which took account of local councils, local conditions of economy or society and different interpretations deriving from different schools of interpretation.[39] Each time someone like Theodulf or Alcuin wrote a new commentary, he changed tradition, if only by adding to it. But commentaries on the Bible and commentaries on earlier commentaries were necessary to explain things in new cultural settings or to accommodate people with less learning than earlier readers had had. The Carolingians, by their choices of authorities and in their commentaries were necessarily defining their own tradition, creating a local orthodoxy even as they tried to set forth what they saw as authentic Tradition.[40]

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[37]LC II.31, 323, "If those men [of Hiereia] were heretics, they did not have the power of consecrating or laying on of hands. If they did not have this, these men [of Nicaea], who think they received this [power] from them, have not been consecrated and have not received the laying on of hands."

[38]Morrison, *Tradition and Authority*, 4.

[39]Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, 218.

[40]Ganz, "Theology," 785.

Yet despite all this activity Theodulf rejects the idea that he and his fellow scholars might be adding anything new to the church. One of his stated principles is that each doctrine must be exactly like earlier ones in substance, with nothing added, removed or changed. Indeed, one of his most vehement objections to the Second Nicene Council is that it approved of novelties. Theodulf holds to the precept he found in his Bible: "Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to it or take from it."[41] Over and over again, Theodulf rejects things he considers new and therefore wrong. The Byzantines abandon the traditions of the early Fathers and attempt to bring in new rules.[42] Through desire for empty glory and praise, the Byzantines "*ecclesiae novum aliquod inferre contendant.*"[43] A precise description of what they attempt to introduce is unnecesary; it is enough to say that it is new. The Byzantines could easily avoid errors, says Theodulf, if only they would keep to the words of the prophets, the evangelists and the apostles and to the usages of the holy fathers, with all novelties firmly shut out: "*exclusis vocum novitatibus.*"[44] The very council itself is denounced as unnecessary, since the six previous ecumenical councils have provided all necessary knowledge; the cycle of ecumenical councils is complete as it stands.[45] "*Nihil horum illis deest.*"[46] The

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[41]Deut 12:32.

[42]LC Praef., 101, "*relictis priscorum patrum traditionibus novas et insolitas ecclesiae nituntur inferre constitutiones*," "the traditions of the venerable fathers having been set aside, they strive to bring in new and unaccustomed rules for the church."

[43]LC I.3, 120, "they fight to bring something new into the church."

[44]LC II.24, 282.

[45] Among other reasons, six is a perfect number, encompassing the Trinity and the two testaments and the perfection of church preaching, and the earlier councils fulfil it. Six is a perfect number in a technical, mathematical sense, since it is the sum of its factors, 1, 2, 3. Number mysticism, however, referred to perfect in the sense of complete. How and why the two concepts are related is an interesting question, perhaps going back to the early Greeks.

[46]LC IV.13, 521, "they lack none of those things."

Byzantines reject the ancient fathers and pant for new things, "*nova quaeque constituere anhelant nec humilitate duce antiquorum patrum exemplum sequuntur.*"[47] The Carolingian insistence on precise adherence to the Tradition is very strong; nothing may be changed. Nevertheless, Tradition was not as clearcut as Theodulf implies in the LC; the very intensity of the insistence upon it may betray awareness of the difficulties in maintaining it. In practice, Tradition became numerous traditions, each influenced by local conditions, formed to a large extent by the choice of authority (a choice often predisposed to local men) and subsequent adoption of that authority's interpretation.

A circular definition of one of the senses of '*auctor*', an authority, is one who possesses '*auctoritas*', itself the quality of a man worthy of belief or a of work considered authentic.[48] A man's *auctoritas* derived from his position in society, from his hierarchical status. The hierarchy in this case is ecclesiastical; the ultimate *auctor* is God and the degree of *auctoritas* of anything or any person depends on the nearness of that thing or person to God, that is, upon religious, not secular status[49]. Authority, like Tradition, came from Christ to the apostles and from them to the bishops through succession. Expositors such as Jerome derived their authority from the Holy Spirit which was considered to be present in them, giving the same truth to their works of exposition as was to be found in the original.[50] Those who possessed *auctoritas* could bestow that authority on others in the process enjoined by Theodulf in his testing principle of scholarship. But here too the

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[47]LC IV.22, 543, "they pant to set up new things and do not humbly follow the example of the ancient fathers."

[48]Riché, "Divina Pagina," 724.

[49]Although the two systems of ranking do not appear to be fully independent.

[50]Smalley, *The Study of the Bible*, 12.

process of proclaiming and establishing authority was not as clearcut as Theodulf implies. A recognized set of authorities forms a canon, but even the Biblical canon–the books and order of the books–was not settled for several centuries after Christ. How much more difficult, then, to decide which extra-Biblical writers should be deemed authoritative.

Theodulf, however, had a document which gave him a list of acceptable and authoritative authors–the *Decretum Gelasianum*, a document whose name referred to the supposed author, Gelasius, and which received its own authority from Gelasius' position as bishop of Rome from 492 to 496.[51] In fact, the document is not authentic in terms of hierarchical authority; it is now suggested that it was drawn up by a clerk in southern Gaul in the sixth century, a provenance which accounts for its decidedly pro-Latin bias and places it firmly within a local tradition.[52] Nevertheless, Theodulf and his colleagues believed it to be authoritative; Theodulf explicitly refers his readers to it, by both author and title:

> "*Quod in libro beati Gelasii, Romanae urbis antestis, qui inscribitur: 'Decretalis de recipiendis sive non recipiendis codicibus', apertius demonstratur.*"[53]

In Book I chapter 6, Gelasius is also mentioned by name in a discussion of how only those books accepted by Gelasius and other bishops of Rome may be used as sources of teachings:

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[51] *Decretum Gelasianum*, <Http://www.gmu/departments/fld/CLASSICS/decretum.html>; see as well Hubert Bastgen, "Das Bilderkapitular Karls d. Gr. (Libri Carolini) und das sogenannte Decretum Gelasianum," *Neues Archiv* 41(1917/19), 682-690.

[52] Joseph Kelly, *The Concise Dictionary of Early Christianity* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 42.

[53] LC II.13, 261, "This is more plainly shown in the book of blessed Gelasius, bishop of the Roman city, which is entitled *The Decretal about Books which are and are not to be accepted.*"

> *"non ab aliis scripturis nisi ab his, quas illa [sancta Romana ecclesia] inter canonicas recipit, testimonia sint sumenda, nec aliorum doctorum nisi eorum qui a Gelasio vel ceteris illius sanctae sedis pontificibus suscepti sunt, dogmata sint amplectenda..."*[54]

Again, however, a seemingly unequivocal statement is not what it first appears; not all works are mentioned by name, and works which are not mentioned at all but which agree with accepted works are themselves to be accepted, leaving the same lack of clarity concerning which books agree with accepted works and who says so. Given the variety of local traditions, an overall lack of agreement is not surprising. For questions confined to the local level, that lack of agreement was probably manageable or even unnoticed. The LC, however, deals with dissensions between two groups which, together, covered most of Christianity and which cherished the concept of the universal Church and the authority residing in it by virtue of that universality.

The *Decretum*, only a part of which carries the heading *Decretalis de recipiendis sive non recipiendis codicibus,* begins with lists of the books forming the Biblical canon. The *De recipiendis* portion justifies Rome's position as the leading bishopric of the church and then gives a long list of accepted writings. First are the councils, from the First Nicene Council to Chalcedon. Next are the works of individuals from Cyprian to Pope Leo I by name, then a variety of works from the acts of the martyrs to the the lives of hermits such as Antony or those parts of Origen accepted by Jerome. The final component lists works not received, from the acts of the apostle Andrew to Acacius of Constantinople and all heretics and schismatics, whether known by name or not. The list

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[54]LC I.6, 132, "not from any writings except those which it [the church] accepts among the canonical works are testimonies to be used, nor are the teachings of any teachers except those received by Gelasius or other pontiffs of the holy see to be embraced."

of authors rejected by name is even longer than the list of named accepted authors and includes writers such as Tertullian and Montanus.[55]

Theodulf thus had authority for his choice of authorities. A glance at the list of citations in Appendix 4 Part 2 of Freeman's edition of the LC shows that the leading figures approved by the *Decretum*–Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose–are well represented.[56] Theodulf's principles of scholarship, although he derives them from a Biblical verse, merely reflect the thinking embodied in the *Decretum*, which names authorities for him and gives him a way of extending this authority to those writing after the composition of the *Decretum*. Other leading sources in the LC are Isidore and Cassiodorus, too recent to be on the *Decretum* by name, but neatly covered, at least for Theodulf, both by its approval of orthodox thinkers "*omnium patrum orthodoxorum, qui in nullo a sanctae Romanae ecclesiae consortio deviarunt*" and by Theodulf's principles, as expressed in Book IV chapter 11.[57]

Given such sources then, all certified as carriers of authentic Tradition, Theodulf was able to support any statement he made with a variety of authorities, whether Biblical or lesser (such as the Fathers), and thus show in his rejection of the assertions of the Second Nicene Council what he and his colleagues considered to be true Tradition. Book I chapter 25, for instance, is a routine rejection of a statement made by a participant in the Second Nicene Council, one which involved a Bible verse. In this example, bishop Leo of Focia justifies his adoration of images with

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[55] *Decretum Gelasianum*, II.1-V.

[56] Freeman, *Opus Caroli Regis*, 598-609.

[57] *Decretum Gelasianum*, IV.3, "of all the orthodox fathers who do not vary in any way from agreement with the holy Roman church"; LC IV.11, 512-514.

> "*Convertisti planctum meum in gaudium mihi, conscidisti saccum meum et circumdedisti me laetitia.*"[58]

After a few remarks on the general incompetence of the Second Nicene Council and an extension of that incompetence to Leo, Theodulf repeats Leo's Biblical citation with a small variation–"*praecinxisti me laetitia.*"[59] He then reinterprets the verse as a reference to the Church rather than to an individual (Leo, in Leo's interpretation) and draws support from another verse from the same Psalm, given an equally broad interpretation that includes an unacknowledged but no doubt recognized phrase from I Cor. 10:11 "*in quos fines saeculorum devenerunt*," connecting the evening and its weeping with 'our time', "*nostri temporis aetatem.*"[60] Then Theodulf continues with two quotations naming the prophet Isaiah, another allusion to I Cor 15:53, a direct acknowledged quotation of the following verse, I Cor. 15:54 and a final allusion to Col. 3:4, all in the last half of a fairly brief chapter.[61] The argument consists of the series of quotations and allusions, amplified by Theodulf's stipulations as to the proper interpretation of each word or phrase; the quotations are not merely cited, they are explained and fitted into the argument.

The short chapter 27 of Book I refutes in a similar manner the Byzantine interpretation of "*Disperdat Dominus universa labia dolosa et linguam magniloquam.*"[62] Theodulf connects the verse, which the Byzantines say applies to their own ancestors, to

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[58] Ps 29:12; LC I.25, 216, "You have changed my mourning into rejoicing, you have torn my sackcloth and surrounded me with gladness."

[59]Freeman attributes the change to Theodulf's familiarity with the Visigothic-mozarabic variant. LC, 217, note 1.

[60]LC I.25, 217. Ps. 29:6, "*ad vesperum demorabitur fletus et ad matutinum laetitia*," "weeping will tarry in the evening and joy in the morning." I Cor. 10:11, "Now these things happened to them as a warning, but they were written down for our instruction, upon whom the end of the ages has come."

[61]LC I.25, 216-218.

[62]LC I.27, 221, Ps. 11:4, "The Lord destroyed all the deceitful lips and the boastful tongue."

the New Testament event of the crucifixion. Using a series of seven allusions and direct quotations, all from the New Testament, he compares the two events–Hiereia council and crucifixion–and their participants in order to demonstrate that the verse prefigures the crucifixion.[63] Book III chapter 13, a longer chapter denouncing Irene's presence at the synod on the grounds that she is a woman, has eleven explicit quotations from the Bible and another twenty-nine short indirect quotations from or allusions to both the Old and New Testaments, as well as five allusions or unacknowledged quotations from Jerome and Isidore.[64] The number and the variety of the quotations provide the weight of the argument, which combines exegesis with a string of authoritative statements to prove that women are not permitted to lead or speak in church.

In Book II chapter 16, Theodulf explicitly attacks the Nicene interpretation of an excerpt from Augustine. The assault opens with quotations from unimpeachable authorities–the apostle John and "*eadem summa maiestas*", i.e., God speaking to Moses. Next come several statements from Paul, "*vas electionis, doctor gentium*," to supply the proper interpretation for Augustine's passage. A different passage from Augustine is followed by one from Ambrose, called on by name, "*sanctissime Ambrosi*"; the quotation from Ambrose itself contains scriptural quotations and allusions. Yet another set of Biblical quotations from both Old and New Testaments and allusions to both Jerome and another work of Augustine wind up the argument. The last words are two quotations attributed to Paul[65]. Here Theodulf uses Biblical passages chosen by himself or

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[63]LC I.27, 221-222
[64]LC III.13, 385-391.
[65]LC II.16, 263-267.

embedded in the work of a patristic author to remove slurs–as he sees them–from the reputation of one of the leading western authorities.

Elsewhere, however, Augustine is the authority and quotations from his works support the argument. In Book II chapter 22, he is one of the supports for the assertion that those who need images to help them recall the saints have bad memories, alongside, of course, several quotations from the Bible–Psalms, John, Corinthians, Matthew, Isaiah and Romans.[66] Augustine and Jerome are the most quoted of the Fathers, and each is clearly well-known and well-studied; the quotations come from a wide variety of works.

Augustine is named as the source for the above quotation "*sanctissimus Augustinus*", but recent authorities such as Bede and Isidore are usually merely incorporated into the writing without acknowledgement. For instance, Book II chapter 30 has excerpts from Isidore referred to Jerome; Isidore is merely the conduit for the acknowledged (both generally and on Gelasius' list) authority of Jerome.[67] Selections from Isidore's *Etymologiae* form the framework for the passage describing the scholarship to be found in the Bible.[68] Cassiodorus too is used as an unacknowledged source; in the same chapter passages from Cassiodorus' *Exposition on the Psalms* are inserted in several places (once under Augustine's name.)[69]

When Theodulf does refer to authorities by name, he often buttresses that authority by descriptive terms. Gregory the Great, for example, is "*venerabilis papa*" or

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[66]LC II.22, 275-277.
[67]LC II.30, 313-314.
[68]LC II.30, 314-315.
[69]LC II.30, 313.

"*beatu[s] Gregoriu[s]*" or "*beatissimus Gregorius, sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae antestis,*" Jerome is "*beat[us] Hieronim[us], Hebraicae linguae peritissim[us].*"[70] Authorities within the Bible are also given strong recommendations. Paul is usually "*vas electionis*", David is a prophet, sometimes "*egregius*" or "*sanctissimus*". Moses is noteworthy both for typological and prefigurative reasons and for his connection with the Ark of the Covenant and its importance in the Nicene justification of the adoration of images; Moses' qualifications and experiences therefore receive almost a full chapter–and that not a short one–to themselves: Moses is

> "*sanct[us] vir[ ],*" "*legislator[ ],*" "*Moyse, qui videat arboreos ramos incendia pati et non uri, qui obstupescat suae virgae rigorem in sinuosum conversam esse draconem–cuius administratione Nilicolae decem prodigiosis feriantur plagis...*"

and so on, at length.[71]

The Biblical quotations are the highest authority in the LC; Theodulf relies on the ultimate, the supreme authority which cannot be trumped by any other. Yet the Second Nicene Council was equally lavish in its use of Biblical references to support its positions and decisions. How then did such differences between the Byzantines and the Franks arise? This question leads directly to the problem of differing methods of exegesis and particularly to the spiritual interpretation which Theodulf insists upon in his principles of scholarship.

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[70]LC II.23, 278, "venerable pope"; IV.12, 515, "blessed Gregory"; III.25, 453, "most blessed Gregory, bishop of the holy Roman church"; II.30, 313, "blessed Jerome, very skilled in the Hebrew language."

[71]LC II.26, 286-287, ""holy man," "lawgiver," "Moses, who was astounded that the stiffness of his staff turned into a sinuous serpent–in whose administration the dwellers of the Nile were struck by ten prodigious plagues–who saw tree branches endure fire without burning"; see also Chapter 3 part B, Rhetoric.

C. Exegesis

All Theodulf's scholarship through his principles and his tools is directed in the LC to a single end, the correct interpretation of Scripture, for that is how he tackles the questions of iconoclasm and iconodulism: do the citations used by the Byzantines mean what the Byzantines say they do? Theodulf managed, of course, to work in other concerns such as distaste for the Byzantines or the proper attitude toward art, but much of the LC deals directly with the interpretation of Biblical verses and how the Byzantines have got it wrong.

In Book IV chapter 11, Theodulf puts great emphasis on the spiritual interpretation of Biblical verses. Elsewhere he insists that the Byzantines are wrong in their interpretations of the verses they put forward in support of image worship because they interpret them literally. Moreover, errors of interpretation have serious consequences.

> *"...nos, qui secundum Apostolum legem spiritalem esse scimus, quibusdam mysteriorum archanis instruimur, illi vero, qui imaginum adorationem diligunt, suae vaecordiae vanitatem firmare moliuntur; nos mysticis sensibus perdocemur, illi in sui erroris magnitudine firmantur, nos admoniti per umbram indagamus veritatem, illi decepti per rem bene gestam ad rem non gerendam sumunt auctoritatem."*[72]

Biblical exegesis was important to Theodulf as a part of scholarship–indeed, one became a scholar in order to understand and explain the Bible, to interpret it to oneself and others. Because salvation rested upon correct belief and practice, which were prescribed by the

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[72]LC II.9, 253; "...we, who know according to the Apostle that the law is spiritual, are instructed in certain secrets of the mysteries, but they, who value the adoration of images, strive to strengthen the vanity of their madness; we are taught with mystic meanings, they are strengthened in the magnitude of their error; we are warned and investigate truth through shadow, they are deceived and, in the name of a deed well done, claim authority for a deed which must not be done."

Bible, it was essential to have the true, the valid interpretation. But merely to acknowledge a problem or to contemplate the study and erudition considered necessary for correct interpretation of the Bible is to admit that interpretation is not straightforward and that more than one interpretation is possible, if not correct. How then to find and recognize the right one when so many were available, from heretics, schismatics, or simply the unlearned or misguided? There were strong forces at work supporting misinterpretation; as Jerome said and Theodulf quotes, "*Male diabolus Scripturas interpretatur.*"[73]

Part of the solution to the problem lies in familiar concepts, already discussed–tradition and authority. Biblical exegesis went back centuries, even in Theodulf's day, and had developed two main schools, the Antiochene and the Alexandrian.[74] Each school took account of both literal and spiritual interpretation, but the Alexandrian gave much greater weight to the spiritual. Indeed, the Antiochene developed partly in reaction to the Alexandrian, to curb its excesses. But Eusebius championed spiritual interpretation, so did Ambrose and so too, though with some reservations, did Augustine and Jerome. With the luminaries Ambrose, Augustine and Jerome behind it, a strongly spiritual interpretation flourished in Latin Christianity. The church itself, says Theodulf, prefers invisible things: "*visibilibus contemptis ad invisibilia transit.*"[75] Greek Christianity, however, preferred the Antiochene school, yet another

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[73]LC I.5, 131, "The devil interprets Scripture badly."

[74]Smalley, *The Study of the Bible*, 9-25; Meyendorff, "Byzantium as the Center," 57; Erich Auerbach, *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 55-59.

[75]LC I.29, 229, "despising visible things, it passes over to invisible."

division among Christians which meant that the Byzantines and the Franks started from different fundamental assumptions.

Another sort of interpretation was typology, which connected an event, not necessarily important in itself, to a later event and thus gave both added significance.[76] To an outsider, the connections might appear forced or strained. One had to be, so to speak, "determined to interpret" typologically.[77] The Carolingians possessed such determination in large measure; moreover, Carolingian typological thinking centred on the Bible in a very specific way. The Old Testament and the people and events in it were ruthlessly and relentlessly seen as types and as prefigurations of the Incarnation, the New Testament and all the events that followed, up to and including the Carolingians' own era. The simplest event, the briefest scriptural verse had significance far beyond its surface appearance. One had only to recognize it.

Methods of interpretation, three and fourfold, were developed–literal or historical, allegorical, tropological, anagogical. But, as Congar says, allegories and symbolism can be very "accommodating."[78] Rules were worked out, especially from Augustine and Cassiodorus, and carefully applied. Here again, tradition and authority came into play. Theodulf, in fact, used the the *Clavis Melitonis* or Melito's key, which listed the symbolic meanings of various objects.[79] The *Clavis* was attributed to Melito, bishop of Sardis in the second century and was known to Augustine; Theodulf appended it to his edition of

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[76]Smalley; *The Study of the Bible*, 6-7; Auerbach, *Scenes from the Drama*, 28-30.

[77]Auerbach, *Scenes from the Drama*, 29.

[78]Congar, *Tradition and Traditions*, 87.

[79]Melito, bishop of Sardis, "Clavis: codex Claromontanus," *Symbolisme et Ecriture*, Jean-Pierre Laurant (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1988), 265-336.

the Bible.

The *Clavis* contains lists of words, organized by theme (body, plants, time and so on); each word is followed by one or more interpretations. Accordingly, when Theodulf says that fine linen signifies virginity, he is not inventing something on the spur of the moment to suit his desired interpretation, he is presenting a relationship that has been sanctioned by authority and tradition.[80] There is no room left for personal interpretation and experience such as the Byzantines made allowance for and even introduced in the Second Nicene Council.[81] The two opposing positions are clear in Book III chapter 26. Bishop Theodore of Myra told a story about his archdeacon's dream, in support of honour for images. Theodulf retorts that "*Theodorus Mirensis episcopus ridiculose et pueriliter egerit*," and, pointing to divine law, warns that dreams are deceptive:

> "*Manifestum est enim divinae legis auctoritatibus somnia et auguria vana esse et quanto quis ea amplius timuerit, tanto cor eius amplius falli.*"[82]

Theodulf's confident, precise interpretations fill the LC. For instance, in Book I chapter 29, he gives the possible meanings for "domus Dei", the house of God. Allegorically, it is the church; anagogically, it is heaven; tropologically, it is the soul.[83] Therefore, he says, in general, when the house of God is mentioned, the reader is not to

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[80] "*Pro bysso, virginitatem*" LC I.29, 225; "*byssum, castitatis vel continentiae candor*," *Clavis*, VIII.IV.23, 294. Theodulf appears to have had further resources, however; he is not bound by or limited to the *Clavis*. In the same chapter, he gives "*pro 'cocco', confessionis gloriam*," while the *Clavis* gives "*coccus, caritatis ardor, vel cruciatus mentis*." LC I.29, 225; *Clavis* VIII.IV.21, 294. For a discussion of the *Clavis*, see Dahlhaus-Berg, *Nova Antiquitas*, 87-90.

[81] See also Meyendorff, "Byzantium as the Center."

[82] LC III.26, 459, "Theodore, bishop of Myra, behaved ridiculously and childishly"; 462, "for it is clear by the authority of divine law that dreams and auguries are empty of meaning, and the more someone fears them, the more he is deceived in his heart."

[83] LC I.29, 224.

think of a material building.[84] Theodulf's view was not unique to him; the marginal comment here is "*sapienter*"–wisely said.[85] Next, he gives the specific allegorical significance of a long list of articles or materials to be found in a church. Gold is faith or internal feeling; silver is confession or the beauty of eloquence, incorruptible wood is wisdom, fine linen is virginity and so on.[86] Nothing is what it seems; everything is part of an elaborate code which must be learned and carefully applied, one of the tasks of scholarship. Theodulf insists on spiritual interpretation; interpretation must be done this way:

> "*cetera quae de ea [facies ecclesiae)] in hisdem Canticis canticorum scribuntur, non carnaliter sed spiritualiter intelligenda est*,"

or, as the chapter heading of Book I chapter 29 begins bluntly, "*Quomodo intellegendum sit...*"[87]

Such interpretation uncovers much prefiguration; almost endless examples appear throughout the LC, with, again, specific meanings attached to each event; idiosyncratic interpretations are not allowed. Jacob wrestling with the angel represents Christ's passion, and not, as the priest John would have it, the mind seeing God. Although Theodulf concedes that the name 'Israel' may sometimes be interpreted as "a man seeing

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[84]LC I.29, 224, "*Et idcirco in plerisque Scripturae sanctae locis, cum domus Dei legitur, non parietes nec quaedam materialis aedificatio, sed spiritalis et inexistimabilis Dei intellegenda est habitatio*," "And therefore, in most places of holy Scripture, when the house of God is mentioned, you must understand, not walls or a certain material edifice, but the spiritual and inexistimable dwelling of God."

[85]LC I.29, 224, an instance of the usefulness of Freeman's inclusion of the marginal comments.

[86]LC I.29, 225.

[87]LC II.10, 255, "The other things which are written about it [the church] in the same Song of Solomon must be understood not carnally but spiritually"; I.29, 224, "How ..... must be understood"; the chapter headings for I.8, II.3, II.4, II.10 and II.11 include the same phrase.

God," "strong with God," or even "a prince with God," no-one received in the canon–a significant phrase, "*qui in canone recipiuntur*"–is known to have used "mind seeing God."[88] Originality (though John may not have been original, merely following his own canon) is not acceptable. Other prefigurations include the twelve stones that Joshua set up in the river Jordan (twelve apostles and baptism,) the statues of ox and lion set up by Solomon in the temple (the gentleness of the ox and ferocity of the lion possessed by the apostles,) the altar in Egypt (Christ setting up the faith in this world, sometimes called Egypt.)[89] Ordinary actions and artifacts possess more than a general symbolism–a lion representing ferocity, common enough; they point to specific future events–the ferocity of the apostles.

The most extensive interpretation centres on the Ark of the Covenant. Every element of every piece in the tableau, every position of every element, holds significance, in a combination of allegory and prefiguration. Indeed, to read Theodulf is to think the Ark was created for the purpose of prefiguration.

> "*Fecisse sanctus Moyses praecipiente Domino propitiatorum et arcam testamenti et duos cherubim aureos nec non et excidisse tabulas lapideas legitur, non tamen adorare iussisse; nec ea ob praeteritarum quarundam rerum memoriam, sed ob futurorum mysteriorum sacratissimam praefigurationem creditur condidisse.*"[90]

The Ark and its attendants therefore shine with mysteries: "*illa vero semper sanctis et*

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[88]LC I.11, 158. The first and last of these interpretations can be found in the *Clavis*, XIV.IV, 331; XIV.V.48, 334.

[89]LC I.21, 205; II.9, 254; II.11, 258.

[90]LC I.15, 169, "One reads that holy Moses, on God's orders, made the mercy-seat and the Ark of the Covenant and the two golden cherubim and in addition that he cut out the stone tablets, but not that he ordered adoration; it is believed that these things were established not for the sake of remembrance of certain past things, but for the sake of very holy prefiguration of future mysteries."

excellentibus radiant mysteriis."[91] Certain people, says Theodulf, interpret the Ark as Christ, the two sets of tablets of laws as the two testaments, the mercy seat above the Ark as mercy overriding law, manna as the bread of heaven and so on. Other authorities give a moral interpretation in which gold equals wisdom, the Ark is God's secret and manna is grace.[92] Theodulf here acknowledges two interpretations, but neither is literal; each teaches deep meanings and relationships beyond the literal fact of an ornamented box, a container for religious artifacts, not unlike the reliquaries of Theodulf's own time.

The only way to achieve the spiritual rather than the literal interpretation which Theodulf insists upon is to use words.

> "*Unde imaginum usus, qui a gentilium traditionibus inolevit, sacrae legis libris aequiperari nec debet nec valet, quia in libris, non in imaginibus doctrinae spiritalis eruditionem discimus.*"[93]

An image could not convey any new information; indeed, it could not convey any useful information at all unless it was somehow given a context–either by prior knowledge of the event or person or idea it represented, or by writing which accompanied and identified it. Theodulf speaks of two paintings, without inscriptions, each of a woman with a child. The images are adored or cast aside according to the identifications given them by someone; no identity is inherent in the pictures.[94] Accordingly if a Christian (or anyone) confronts a new and unknown image, how is he or she to understand its full significance? Words are essential; only they can give us the information we need.

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[91]LC I.15, 170, "but those things always shine with surpassing holy mysteries."

[92]LC I.15, 170, 172.

[93]LC II.30, 304, "Hence, the use of images which grows from the traditions of the peoples neither ought to be nor can be compared to the books of sacred law, since we acquire our knowledge of spiritual doctrine in books, not in images."

[94]LC IV. 16, 528.

Some of the importance given to the word, especially the written word, can be seen in the treatment accorded to books. For many of the Franks and especially their northern and eastern subjects, books and literacy arrived together with Christianity and so had no existence outside a specifically Christian one. To the earlier Romans and Greeks, books had been useful repositories of all sorts of knowledge without divine connections–political propaganda, erotic poetry, technical manuals about how to organize an army or manage a farm or build a road. But for the Franks and the peoples they were endeavouring to convert, books were synonymous with Christianity and the power of the holy. Books became symbols and were treated as aesthetic objects. They were adorned with jewels and given cases like reliquaries and were even considered to work miracles.[95] At the same time the Franks were in close contact and conflict with idol-worshipping pagans, Saxons and Avars; it was the word written down in a sacred book which made the Franks different.

Throughout the LC, Theodulf elevates the text, the written word, above the image in importance. The written word was central to his scholarship. His principles deal with authors and writings and have nothing to do with artists or images, which are never invoked to prove any interpretation or belief.[96] The thrust of the Carolingian learning project was Holy Scripture and the wisdom and salvation it provided; images were not involved other than peripherally.

Theodulf's learning thus provides him with the means to make what he sees as the

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[95]For a discussion of the general attitude toward books, see Peter Dinzelbacher, "Die Bedeutung des Buches in der Karolingerzeit," *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 24(1984), 257-288.

[96]Although images may be used to illustrate the words of the Bible. Theodulf himself commissioned a large mosaic of the Ark of the Covenant for the monastery of Germigny-des-Prés.

correct interpretation backed up by the proper tradition and authorities. Moreover, the details of Theodulf's principles of scholarship–his choice of authorities and his method of exegesis–underline the difference between Frankish and Byzantine scholarship. Theodulf's scholarship provides not only the means of attack but yet another reason to attack. His scholarship focuses on Biblical interpretations and expands in the LC to include the impact of these interpretations on religious belief and practice and on political life, for people who fail to accept Theodulf's interpretations or who fail to behave in accord with them or who draw other conclusions or who, worst of all, try to impose those erroneous conclusions on others, are endangering the church and thereby the salvation of humanity. Theodulf uses scholarship as the means to a true understanding of uncontaminated doctrine that will provide salvation to all believers. The doctrines of those who would mislead Christians must be refuted; at the same time, the reputations of those who do the misleading must be destroyed, leaving a void into which the enlightened scholars who interpret Holy Scripture properly may naturally move. A fighting spirit becomes a necessary part of scholarship.

Chapter 5. Attacking the Byzantines

The tone of the LC varies only from harsh scorn to belligerence; polemic infuses each chapter. In what may be seen as the political side of the LC, the author attacks the participants of the Second Nicene Council as a group and, in some cases, as individuals, on grounds of character, behaviour and ability. The attack is more than merely pointing out places where the Byzantines have misinterpreted Scripture and showing flaws in their arguments. It is not a mild comparison of 'them' and 'us' leaving the readers to make a gently directed inference; it is *ad hominem*, personal and pointed, intent on showing not only that the Byzantines are wrong but also that they never will be nor can be right. The LC are noteworthy for what the Franks thought–or were prepared to say they thought–of the Byzantines and their political and religious leaders. Given that the two groups had got along for two or three centuries on polite if distant terms and had conducted negotiations for a marriage alliance only a few years before and would soon do so again, the constant venom of the LC is startling.

Several factors combined to produce the venom. First is the political or military clash discussed earlier; the two empires were now facing each other along an ill-defined border and had overlapping territorial claims in Italy.[1] Next is the cultural or intellectual irritant. The Byzantine empire treated its neighbours with a patronizing condescension, refusing to admit any equals, while flattering those who could be of use to it–not uncommon behaviour for a powerful empire, but never popular.[2] Holding a council

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[1]See Chapter 2.

[2]McCormick, "Byzantium and the West," 360; Grierson, "The Carolingian Empire," 890.

which claimed to be ecumenical and decreeing basic belief and ritual without even informing, let alone consulting, the Latin-speaking churches would have appeared to the Franks as just another presumptuous act.

There was no chance that the Byzantines could physically force the Carolingians to adopt the decrees of the Second Nicene Council, any more than they had earlier been able to force thorough-going iconoclasm on the Franks or even on those parts of Italy then affiliated with Byzantium. But Pippin had contented himself with the synod of Gentilly; the strength of the attack in the LC was new. The Carolingian empire was larger than it had been thirty years earlier and now included some areas that had only lately been tied to the Byzantines and hence might listen to them, creating division within the new empire. Then too, the Carolingians knew their own strength, especially against the Byzantines; they had easily overcome the Lombards who bedevilled the Byzantines for two centuries and had just seen off an attempted Byzantine return to Italy. To be expected meekly to accept orders from Byzantium after that was an insult.

Roper suggests a purely political and internal motive for the LC and its animus. He says the Franks deliberately and knowingly misconstrued the *Acta* of the Second Nicene Council, seizing upon them as a means of painting the Byzantines as heretics and thus forcing the pope to turn to the Franks for protection of the church.[3] In return, the Carolingian dynasty would receive legitimacy. This theory portrays the pope as helpless before the cunning manoeuvres of the Carolingians and, furthermore, fails to account for the lack of follow-up: the LC were never quite finished and were not published; the

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[3]Roper, *Carolingian Diplomacy*, 127-147.

Carolingians never forced the pope to accept their views; the Franks were even briefly on speaking terms with the Byzantines later in the decade. The theory is as cynical as the ploy it describes and ignores the sound religious reasons for opposing the decrees with vehemence.

For religious concerns were a third potent factor. The Carolingians (justifiably, according to Auzépy) thought that the decrees were commanding a new and wrong doctrine; they were therefore obliged to oppose them, just as all true Christians were.[4] Charlemagne had even more reason to do so: he saw himself, as the *Admonitio Generalis* and preface to the LC make clear, as having a duty to defend the church as an important part of his kingly office. He was now actively promoting Christianity throughout his realms for the salvation of his subjects (and himself); the effort was wasted if he were forbidden to provide the doctrine that led to salvation. Religious differences aggravated dislike of the Byzantines provoked by political and intellectual squabbles. The multifaceted animus behind the attack on Byzantine learning shows in the alacrity with which the Franks took the worst possible view of what the Byzantines had said and done; there was no charity in the Frankish interpretation of the Second Nicene Council.

In the Franks' eager desire to protect Christianity, scholarship had an important role to play. The purpose of scholarship, pursued throughout the Carolingian Renaissance, was the correct interpretation of the Bible. That was merely the first step, however; production of the correct interpretation was useless if it were then ignored or

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[4]Auzépy, "Francfort et Nicée II," 279-292. Thümmel agrees; he concludes by saying that the Carolingian theology was better than the Byzantine or papal. "*Die fränkische Theologie fühlte sich nicht nur den Byzantinern, sondern auch Rom überlegen, und sie war es gewiss auch, wie die Libri Carolini zeigen*," Thümmel, "Die Fränkische Reaktion," 980.

rejected. It must be spread before all Christians, while the flaws and dangers of competing, incorrect doctrines and their promoters, whether individuals or political entities, must be exposed and then destroyed. Scholarship combined with the recent military successes and resulting Frankish exuberance to increase both the willingness and the ability of the Franks to defend their faith; learning was crucial for the aggressive defence of true Christianity.

The Carolingians had had diplomatic contact with the Byzantines and had been exposed to Byzantine attitudes to their rulers and to the language that expressed those attitiudes. '*Conregnare*', to which Theodulf devotes a chapter of scorn and vituperation, need not have been interpreted as a deliberate presumption of equality with God, but could have been recognized as a traditional (and presumably therefore laudable) formula which acknowledged that secular power comes from God.[5] Similarly, "we and God ask" could have been seen as God guiding the rulers, not the rulers being arrogant.[6]

Theodulf makes a concerted attack on the details of Byzantine scholarship. Although he displays considerable knowledge of textual problems such as translation, copying errors and textual variants, both in the LC and in the edition of the Bible he later prepared, he never considers any of these as possibilities when he attacks the Byzantines. Instead he sneers at their poor diction and garbled writing or their use of the wrong variant.[7] All these objections are part of a general attack on Byzantine scholarship: they bend words, ("*verbum ... inflectere*") use irrelevant ideas, ("*non ad id quod illi putant*

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[5]LC I.1, 105-115.
[6]LC I.4, 124-128.
[7]See also Chapter 3 part A, Grammar.

pertinere") lack education, ("*inutilis et inerudita interpraetatio eorum*") and write badly ("*O sensus confundens potius sententias quam ordinans, frangens potius verba quam proferens.*"[8]) Or, as Theodulf sums it up,

> "*Saepe iam in hoc opere diximus, quod et perspicue apparet, paene omnes eorum sententias, quas ob imaginum adorationem in sua synodo protulerunt, quodammodo tantis esse ignaviae caliginibus interpolatas, ut eloquentia sensuque carentes difficile earum sensus lectorum attingat mentes.*"[9]

in other words, the Byzantines lack those basic skills provided by a thorough knowledge of the trivium, obligatory for Carolngian scholars.

The constant small attacks are part of Theodulf's stategy of showing that the Byzantines are wrong in the details, that one mistake has led to many.

> "*Accidere etenim plerumque solet ut qui semel falli coeperit, crebro fallatur et qui semel a via recesserit et tramitem sui itineris ducem sequi neglexerit, per abrupta et invia affatim errore duce feratur.*"[10]

Mistakes in details are connected to large mistakes: "*Non mirandum est, si falluntur in minimis, qui falluntur in magnis.*"[11] If the details and small components are wrong, that is a consequence of the great mistake of adoration of images. Accordingly, no detail is too small to be ridiculed in the effort to destroy piecemeal the basis for the Nicene *Acta.*

The Byzantine scholars are subjected to the same ridicule as their scholarship.

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[8]LC II.4, 245, "bend words"; II.18, 268, "does not pertain to what they think"; IV.23, 544, "their useless and unlearned interpretations"; IV.23, 547, "O understanding confusing rather than organizing opinions, crushing words rather than revealing them."

[9]LC IV.15, 525, "we have often said already in this work what is clearly apparent, that almost all their opinions, which they have proffered in their synod on behalf of the adoration of images, have somehow been falsified by such great fogs of laziness that, lacking sense and eloquence, the meaning of those opinions reaches the minds of readers with difficulty."

[10]LC I.12, 161, "For it commonly happens that he who is once deceived is frequently deceived and he who departs from the road and takes no heed of the path, his journey's guide, is carried through abundant steep and trackless ways, led by error."

[11]LC II.7, 251, "If those who are deceived in great matters are deceived in small, it is not surprising."

The attacks are harsh and personal; the vocabulary, the individual words, applied to the Byzantines are consistently derogatory. Theodulf unremittingly impugns their sanity, their character and their intellectual abilities, from "*stolide et arroganter*" in the title to "*deleramenta*" in the last chapter.[12] Words such as '*stupidus*,' '*stultus*,' ' *demens*,' and '*insanus*' recur throughout the work, usually in the superlative. The ridicule of both the synod and individual participants is unceasing. The Byzantines talk too much, and that foolishly: "*inordinatas loquutionum nenias*," "*crebrius ceteris loquutus fuisse et non minus delirasse*." They babble: "*Garriunt enim*." They have bad memories:

> "*quod non bonam habeant memoriam, qui, ut non obliviscantur sanctorum vel certe ipsius Domini, idcirco imagines erigunt*."

They behave perversely :

> "*His ita se habentibus perversum et ultra perversum est, ut alternatim converso ordine praestantioribus deteriora deterioribusve praestantiora dentur, et adeo imaginum usus magnificetur, ut christianorum res quodammodo extenuentur*."[13]

The Byzantines, that is, lack not only the tools of scholarship, but even the qualities of a scholar, well-ordered speech and thought.

Metaphors too denigrate the Byzantines while flattering the Franks. Military metaphors are especially vivid, showing the Franks aggressively attacking the foolish Byzantines. We shake the firmness of their walls, which they attempt to fortify with

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[12]LC Praef., 97; IV.28, 527.

[13]LC III.12, 379, "disordered babbling speeches"; III.29, 476, "He spoke more frequently than the others and was no less silly"; I.17, 185, " they babble"; II.22, 275, "That those who set up images so that they do not forget the saints or even God Himself do not have good memories"; I.19, 195, "these things being so, it is perverse and more than perverse that alternately, reversing order, inferior qualities are attributed to outstanding things or outstanding qualities to inferior things, to the point that the use of images is highly esteemed, so that the qualities and things of the Christians are somehow diminished."

errors, with the battering rams of our truth.[14] A lengthy and striking metaphor lists the parts of armour and their ultimate uselessness against the swords of righteous men:

> "*hac casside apicem corporis munitam habere arbitratur, ne corusci ensis inlisiones persentiat; hac lorica ceterum corpus munitum habere se putat, ne pilorum ictibus suae stabilitatis iacturam incurrat; hoc clypeo tutelam se nanctam esse credit, per quam spiculorum missilium volatus vulnificos non pertimescat. Sed ita aut obcumbendo fatescet aut delitescendo aufugiet his muniminibus expoliatus, sicut his est ineassum et inutiliter abusus, et tantum sentiet spiritalis gladii per sanctos viros inlati rigorem, ut nec tenuem quidem sibi credat inesse vigorem.*"[15]

The spiritual sword is declared to be as powerful as a sword of polished metal, and scholars can wound and destroy as effectively as warriors can.

Another recurring theme is Byzantine arrogance, often contrasted subtly with Frankish humility. The Byzantines are charged with arrogance ("*arroganter*") in the title itself and frequently thereafter; for instance, "*arrogantiae et vanae laudis appetitum*" or "*arrogantiae fastu*" or "*ventosae arrogantiae inflata ambitio.*"[16] The Franks, however, are humble; Charlemagne acknowledges that he rules "*nutu Dei*" or "*Domino opitulante.*"[17] The Franks are therefore pleasing to God. The political impulse is particularly strong here, for arrogance is a characteristic of bad rulers in the Old Testament, a typological implication that condemns the Byzantines and raises the Franks

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[14]LC II.22, 276.

[15]LC II.5, 246, "He thinks that the peak of his body is protected by this helmet, so that he will not feel deeply the strikes of the gleaming sword; he thinks that the rest of his body is protected by this breastplate, so that he will not incur the loss of his balance through the blows of the spear; he believes he has obtained safety with this shield, so that he does not fear the wound-bearing flights of javelins. But just as he either grows weak and falls down dying, or, deprived of his protection, flees and hides, just as he has vainly and uselessly abused these things, so too he feels so greatly the rigour of the spiritual sword carried by holy men that he does not believe he has even trifling strength."

[16]LC I.5, 129, "a desire for arrogance and empty praise"; II.19, 422, "with the pride of arrogance"; Praef., 98, an inflated desire for conceited arrogance."

[17]LC Praef., 97, "by God's will," "with God's help."

to the status of the ancient Hebrews, the chosen people.

The divide between 'them' and 'us' is emphasized in several direct comparisons, lengthy passages that contrast '*illi*' and '*nos*' and exploit to striking effect Theodulf's use of repetition and balanced sentences.[18] Typical is the following, which contrasts the treatments each people accords to its ancestors:

> "*Nos nostris secundum ecclesiasticum usum per orationum et elemosynarum instantiam deposcimus veniam, illi suis per inanium conciliorum conventus exoptant poenam. Nos nostris quietem exposcimus per missarum sollemnia, illi suis ingerunt convicia per inordinata concilia. Nos nostrorum memoriam facimus in oratione, illi suis anathema iaciunt cum quadam abdicatione. Nos nostrorum spiritus requie potiri oramus in sinu Abrahae, illi suorum optant damnari animas cum Arrio, Sabellio, Dioscoro, Nestorio et Euticete. Nos nostros conlocari postulamus parentes inter agmina beatorum, illi suos inter obstinatas turbas hereticorum.*"[19]

The contrast in words and ideas is thorough, set off by parallelism in structure. We, they; ask, choose; forgiveness, punishment; solemn masses, disorderly councils; columns of the blessed, swarms of heretics. Humility confronts arrogance, and order, disorder.[20]

Such comparisons reinforce the idea of a church divided; they fight against the concept of agreement and unanimity put forth in discussions of ecumenicity. The Byzantines, after all, were not a small group of dissenting Christians who could be ignored or smothered; they were a major part of Christianity and one long accustomed to

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[18]See also Chapter 3, part B, Rhetoric.

[19]LC II.31, 325, "Through persistence in prayers and alms, according to church custom, we ask pardon for our fathers; in assemblies of worthless councils, they long for punishment for theirs. We in solemn masses entreat rest for ours; they in disorderly councils heap reproaches on theirs. We remember ours in prayers; they hurl anathema on theirs with a certain rejection. We pray that the souls of ours find rest in the bosom of Abraham; they desire that the souls of theirs be damned with Arrius, Sabellius, Dioscorus, Nestorius and Eutyches. We ask that our parents be placed among the columns of the blessed; they ask that theirs be placed among the stubborn crowds of heretics."

[20]See too Jonathan Z. Smith, "Differential Equations: on constructing the 'Other'" (The University Lecture in Religion at Arizona State University, 1992).

dominate. The tension between variety and unanimity, between many interpretations and one right interpretation is strong throughout the LC. That two rival interpretations were here associated with two large, powerful and independent political organizations sharpened the fight. Each wanted to prevail and to be accepted as right, as the recognized intellectual power.

To whom then was this unflattering picture of the Byzantines addressed? Certainly not–or at least not directly–to the Byzantines. The language used about the Byzantine political and religious leaders, their procedures and their beliefs– '*stultissimus*' and '*dementissimus*' are typical–is such that no self-respecting ambassador, Frankish or Byzantine, would dare to present it to the Byzantine court. The LC could not even be sent indirectly to the Byzantines unless the senders were eager to provoke a serious diplomatic crisis: no government could overlook the things said in the LC while keeping its self-respect and the respect of others. The only direct address in the LC itself is an occasional vague "let the reader decide" with the implication that the reader will quickly acknowledge the truth of Theodulf's statement. The likely audience then was both Frankish ruling circles and the pope, to assure of them Frankish ability and support and to give them ammunition in a fight with the Byzantines which the Carolingians must have seen as both necessary and inevitable, given the theological statements they had before them. The Carolingians could have seen themselves as merely carrying further, in a different field, the support they already gave the pope through military power.

Chapter 6 An Analysis of a Chapter

The threads of politics, Christian belief and scholarship, closely intertwined throughout the LC, can be seen in a detailed analysis of a single chapter. Book 1 chapter 15, an explanation of why images may not be compared to the Ark of the Covenant, is of average size and typical content; let it serve, then, as an example for analysis. The chapter contends that the Ark has a holiness derived first from its functions when made, second from its creation at the order of the Lord, not a whim of man, and third and especially, from its allegorical significance and its prefiguration of events in the New Testament. Theological concerns are manifold, but images receive little direct attention; rather, the holiness and significance of the Ark are emphasized. These aspects are picked up again later, in another chapter, (Book 2, chapter 26) where the sacred things are listed and directly exalted over images. Authority is invoked in the explanation of the Ark and its significance; there are several Biblical quotations and allusions as well as quotations from the work of Augustine. The use of Augustine not only lends authority to the discussion of the Ark and asserts the length of the tradition behind the Carolingian interpretation, it displays Latin scholarship, both the outstanding scholarship of Augustine himself and the scholarship of the Carolingians who know and appreciate his work.

The chapter heading sets the tone of all that follows; the first two words are '*quam absurde*' (169,1)[1], a clear denigration of the Byzantines. The heading continues with 'strengthening images' and introduces the material that will be contrasted to the images, that is, the Ark of the Covenant and the objects associated with it. The chapter proper

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[1]Numbers in brackets in this chapter refer to pages and line numbers of the chapter in Freeman's edition, pages 169-175.

opens with repetition in reverse order of the last words of the chapter heading, with the insertion of the word '*sanctus*' to emphasize the position of Moses, a tacit criticism of the makers of images (169, 6). '*Legitur*'(169, 10) upholds the word against the image, another frequent theme of the LC. '*Non*' appears in contrasting uses, as part of the emphatic phrase '*nec non*' and then as a negative with '*adorare iussisse*' (169, 10-11), two emotive words. '*Nec*' and '*sed*' (169, 11-12) then introduce a contrast between the Byzantine reason for images–remember things gone by–and the Carolingian understanding of the Old Testament–prefiguration of the mysteries, here strengthened by the superlative '*sacratissimam*' (169, 11-14). Next is another slur directed at the Byzantines: how great the absurdity and madness of those who think as they do (169, 15-16). More repetition stresses the holiness–again in the superlative–of the Ark and its accessories and the commands of the Lord (169, 16-18). Moses is referred to as the lawgiver (169, 18), to underline his quality vis-a-vis that of the Byzantines. The Byzantines are said to attempt,'*conantes*' (169, 19), and to strive, '*moliuntur*' (169, 20), in their comparison of images and the Ark, with the implication that they have not succeeded; the Carolingians at least have seen through their efforts. The next phrase refers back to the magnitude of the Byzantine absurdity and madness, saying that the Carolingians cannot explain or investigate it (169, 21-22), and stressing that the significance of the Ark lies in its allegorical reference to the holy mysteries, not in its mere historical existence, with 'holy' again in the superlative (169, 23). Without explicitly saying so, Theodulf is insisting on spiritual rather than literal interpretation. The following sentence again refers to the Lord's command, this time varying the verb,

from '*praecipere*' to '*iubere*' and again uses 'lawgiver' for Moses (169, 26-27). Without direct reference, the sentence slips into quotation from Augustine, mixing his words with Theodulf's own, in a statement about the creation and purpose of the Ark and mercy seat (169, 29-170, 8). A rhetorical question follows, combining another insult to the Byzantines, so stupid and so demented (170, 11), with contrast introduced by 'not only...but also' (170, 11-12), repetition of '*tam*' (170, 10-14), yet another insult in the superlative '*insolentissimum*' (170, 13) and repetition of '*conetur*' (170, 15)–again only attempting, not succeeding. The next sentence shows more contrast, between '*istae*' and '*illa*', and repetition of '*interdum*', with yet more contrast between things done and lies (170, 15-20). Next is an unacknowledged passage from Bede, attributed only to 'certain people', (170, 21) which explains the allegorical significance of the Ark and its contents; Biblical quotations are brought in as support (170, 20-171, 9). David's stature is stressed by '*egregius propheta*' (171, 5-6). Now that the general allegory has been established, the explanation continues with the reasons for the eminence of the mercy seat and so of the New Testament and mercy over the Old Testament and law, again supported by Biblical quotations (171, 9 and on). Authority is referred to as '*plerosque divinae legis doctores*' (172, 10) which introduces a lengthy passage from Augustine, in which all the elements of the Ark and their positions are given allegorical significance; '*pleros*' implies that the weight of authority is on the Carolingians' side. Theodulf resumes with a reference to things already stated and begins a conclusion with '*igitur*' (173, 11), but then interposes a description of the creation of the second set of tablets, emphasized by asyndeton, parallel structure and the repetition of '*nullo*'(173, 12-14), and contrasts this

creation with that of the first set of tablets by using allegory and prefiguration. The contrast is extended with '*priores*' and '*postiores*', '*terror*' and '*dilectio*', '*vetus*' and '*novum*' (173, 19-21). Fear opposes love, with love placed in the emphatic position at the end of the sentence (173, 21), as Theodulf begins a shift from the law of the Old Testament to the love and mercy in the New. The idea of commanding in the Old Testament is reinforced by repetition and then contrasted to the love and help offered in the New Testament, signified by the second set of tablets. A Biblical quotation introduces the word '*inpleo*' (174, 1), 'to fill'; the idea is strengthened with '*adimplere*' (174, 9) and echoed in '*plenitudo*' (174, 10). Similarly, '*dilectio*' (173, 21) is repeated in lines 174, 11 and 174, 14 and echoed in "*caritate*' (174, 2), itself repeated (174, 9; 174, 11). The sentence beginning "*factum est*" contains several contrasts; '*novo*' and '*veteri*', '*facile*' and *difficile*', '*intus*' and '*foris*', '*corde*' and '*lapide*' (174, 12-16). Another Biblical quotation strengthens the sentence just completed by repeating the comparison and many of its words and by displaying its Biblical source. The next sentence repeats yet again that the law given first represents the Old Testament and is a work of God and expands the idea, past the guilt induced by inability to obey the law, to the grace of God and the New Testament. Parallel structure in the clauses and contrast using '*in illo*' and '*in isto*' add to the contrast of '*spiritus servitutis*' and '*spiritu[s] adoptionis*' (175, 2b-2g). Adoption is used in a general sense as applicable to all Christians, a view put forward in opposition to the Adoptionists.

The final paragraph begins with a return to the Ark, the mercy seat and the cherubim. A short strong conclusion, introduced by '*igitur*' (175, 2h) is made stronger by

'*semper*' (175, 4), 'always'. The allegorical interpretation of Scripture is matched by the insistence on spiritual rather than physical action, that is, on inward and spiritual, not literal, viewing and seeking (175, 4-5). More Biblical allusions to the glory of God, and another sneer at the Byzantines, for walking about in cleverness rather than wisdom, and for corrupting, by misinterpreting, the word of God, lead to the assertion that 'we' find truth (175, 9-13). '*Veritas*' is repeated three times in the last phrases (175, 13-15). The word Christ (175, 16) is used for the first time (earlier references were to the Mediator or the Son) and linked to truth. In a final echo of what went before, the '*domino praecipiente*' or '*iubente*' of the opening ablative absolutes becomes '*ipso* (that is, Christ) *auxiliante*' (175, 15); the contrast between the Old and New Testaments and so the whole allegorical significance of the Ark of the Covenant is contained in the two opposed phrases. The last word of the chapter is '*pervenimus*' (175, 15), the intensified form of '*venire*', 'we arrive', or perhaps, since there is no difference in the written forms, 'we have arrived'. The word carries a sense of completion; that sense and the use of 'we' point yet again at the Byzantines, labelling them as unsuccessful, unable to do more than attempt, and distinct from 'us', who have fulfilled our task.

The chapter as a whole, as is reasonable for a chapter discussing an attempted comparison, makes extensive use of contrast in both words and ideas. Repetition, too, of both words and ideas, is common. When Theodulf refers to the Byzantines, however, there is no repetition. '*Absurde*', '*dementes*', '*hebes*', and so on–there is no limit to the folly of the Byzantines and the ways in which it can be disparaged. The Carolingian presentation of the Byzantines as people not like us, as not worthy of respect, as 'other',

is consistent and strong; the Carolingians, on the other hand, are linked with truth and the fulfillment of their duty. While the Byzantines can only attempt to do things, the Carolingians succeed. The Byzantines mistake cleverness for wisdom, but the Carolingians possess wisdom that enables them to find and recognize truth.

The theological position is also strong. The chapter insists on the spiritual interpretation of Biblical events and on their allegorical significance and meaning for prefiguration, key points in Theodulf's and Carolingian views of Christianity. The manna contained within the Ark, for instance, points to the bread of Heaven and the living bread that is Christ. Biblical quotations that link the manna and the bread are here, as elsewhere, central to Theodulf's argument. The Byzantine failure to recognize the difference between Old and New Testament, between law and mercy, which is, according to Theodulf's spiritual interpretation, represented by the Ark, is a further mark of their unfitness for leadership. The Ark, says Theodulf, is important not for what it did, but for what it represents.

Theodulf sets out his argument in a coherent, well-organized sequence, from his opening statement of the problem to his final allusions. The reasons for writing the LC are present throughout: the scholarship that makes it possible and the Frankish perception of Byzantine arrogance, Byzantine misinterpretation of Scripture, Byzantine lack of scholarship–all the differences between 'us' and 'them'. Theodulf pursues religious, political and intellectual themes (spiritual interpretation, Byzantine ineptitude, acceptable authority) among the minutiae of diction and rhetorical techniques. Large themes and small details are combined with artistry in a work that is both scholarly and responsive to

contemporary issues.

Conclusion

The *Libri Carolini* were a specific response to a specific stimulus, the theological doctrine asserted by the Second Nicene Council. Indeed, so specific were the LC that when the Carolingians realized they had misinterpreted the situation (Hadrian did support the council, albeit with reservations, and the Byzantines had not said what the Carolingians first thought they did), they simply abandoned the work in progress. Furthermore, the court soon faced other, more immediate problems of administration, rebellion and heresy. Within a very few years the LC no longer seemed relevant or useful.

Nevertheless, the factors that impelled the creation of the LC were deeply embedded in the Carolingian court. The scholarship of the LC is that of the beginning of the Carolingian Renaissance, and the techniques and assumptions driving the production of the LC retained their vigour. Foreign-born or trained scholars provided the scholarship, but these scholars met at the Carolingian court where they could goad, stimulate and enlighten one another and try out new methods such as dialectic. Moreover, the court setting increased the impact of the scholars, who proved to be remarkably versatile and useful. Men narrowly trained in Biblical exegesis applied arguments based on the interpretation of Biblical verses to political as well as doctrinal ends–indeed, the two were hardly separable. The LC, like the Carolingian Renaissance, were all about how to interpret the Bible and then apply that interpretation; both applied scholarship in an attempt to effect change, whether at the village level or internationally. Scholarship was necessary not only to uncover the truth, but to proclaim and protect it as

well, against both individuals and empires.

The LC reflect the exuberance and aggressiveness of a newly successful group. They are not defensive, rather they attack the *Acta* on all fronts (a metaphor appropriate to the thinking embodied in the LC.) Nevertheless, the very weight of the attack, all the crushing remarks and vivid phrases, tended toward the destruction of Christian unity. The contrast between unity and diversity, spiritual yearnings and social and political fact, the ideal and the reality, marks the entire work. The LC offered no conciliatory solution to the problem of varied beliefs and traditions; they merely maintained or deepened existing rifts. The Carolingians presented their interpretations and assumptions as final.

At the same time, the Carolingians constructed a harsh picture of the Byzantines. In every aspect of the struggle to understand the truth of Christianity, the Byzantines are shown to be at fault. They do not use and interpret Scripture properly, they do not make sufficient use of the correct (Latin) Fathers, they do not respect tradition and their ancestors. Despite their insistence on a unified, universal Christian Church, the LC induce a feeling that the Carolingians see themselves as distinct from the other members of the former Roman empire, and worthier members at that. We not only think for ourselves, say the Books contemptuously, but we do it better than you. No explicit claim to superiority is presented; rather, through constant harping on the shortcomings of the Byzantines and contrasting assertions of what the Carolingians do, the Carolingians, consciously or not, set themselves above the Byzantines. Better scholarship implies better understanding of Christianity; better understanding implies better practice; better practice and understanding imply greater fitness for leadership. The Carolingians did not,

in the LC, take the next step and claim overtly that the Byzantines had forfeited imperial status, but they gave themselves an argument for doing so.

The theological dispute is conducted between groups whose contours mirror unmistakable political boundaries, so that submission on a theological point carries implications far beyond the doctrinal issue. Not surprisingly, the Byzantines never recognized Carolingian theological interpretations or the accompanying claims to intellectual supremacy; neither did Hadrian. Western Europe dropped the issue of icons for another thirty years, and neither the popes nor the Carolingians pressed for a settlement of their differences. But the Carolingians may have congratulated themselves anyway. They created a work of theology and scholarship and, as Noble says, took advantage of an opportunity to crystallize their thoughts, without any help from Hadrian or Byzantium.[1] When information and correction arrived from Hadrian, the Carolingians could see that although they had been first ignored and then misinformed they had managed to reach reasonable conclusions on their own, and they may well have gained confidence from the effort and its results. Furthermore, in the next round of the iconoclast controversy some thirty years later, the Byzantines, in a letter from their emperor to Louis the Pious, solicited Carolingian input; perhaps, somehow, some echo of the LC and the outrage that inspired them reached the Byzantines. The Carolingians had not changed their opinions; indeed, the council consulted by Louis severely criticized Hadrian and reiterated the views of the LC. What the Carolingians got from the LC was intellectual self-confidence and a *de facto* independence of thought.

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[1]Noble, "Tradition and Learning," 237.

The significance of the LC can thus be seen much more clearly than usual not in the physical product, a set of books, or in their readers, but in the process of creation and its effects on the minds of the creators. The LC were the result of a serious and sustained effort at a work of theology, enriched by scholarship and awareness of past learning and marked by political imperatives. The exercise in theology was confined to a small group of scholars and clerics close to Charlemagne; the LC had no immediate discernable effect on a wider society. Conceived, as they were, within the context of the Carolingian Renaissance and its purpose of applying scholarship and thereby changing society, the LC may seem, at first, to be a failure. Yet, although the LC were never quite finished and made public, the scholars involved had analysed and clarified their beliefs and, in later years, in pastoral and educational positions, had opportunities to spread their ideas. Far north in Aachen, the Carolingians were aware that, in spite of Hadrian's reply to their summary, they did not need instruction from Constantinople or Rome.

Diplomacy and prudence required that the *Libri Carolini* be quietly set aside; they were casualties of that same specificity of circumstance–the religious and political concerns peculiar to the Carolingian court of the early 790's–that had called them into being. The LC may thus seem insignificant in themselves, but the forces that inspired them were not. A particular conjunction of those forces–theological issues, political animosity, intellectual differences and scholarly abilities–led the Carolingian court to begin the LC. A small shift in the court's immediate concerns was enough to halt the work. But the underlying differences of Byzantine and Frank, which flared up at the arrival of the *Acta* and are displayed in the LC, had not been diminished. They could

easily surface again and inspire more public and long-lasting actions.

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